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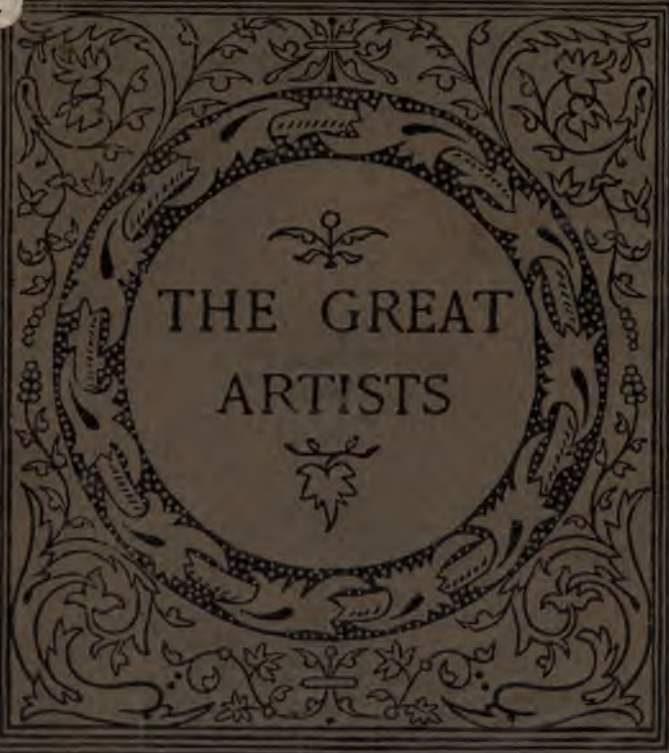
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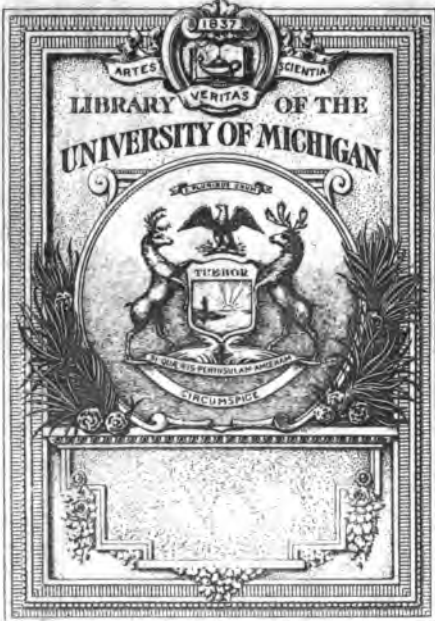
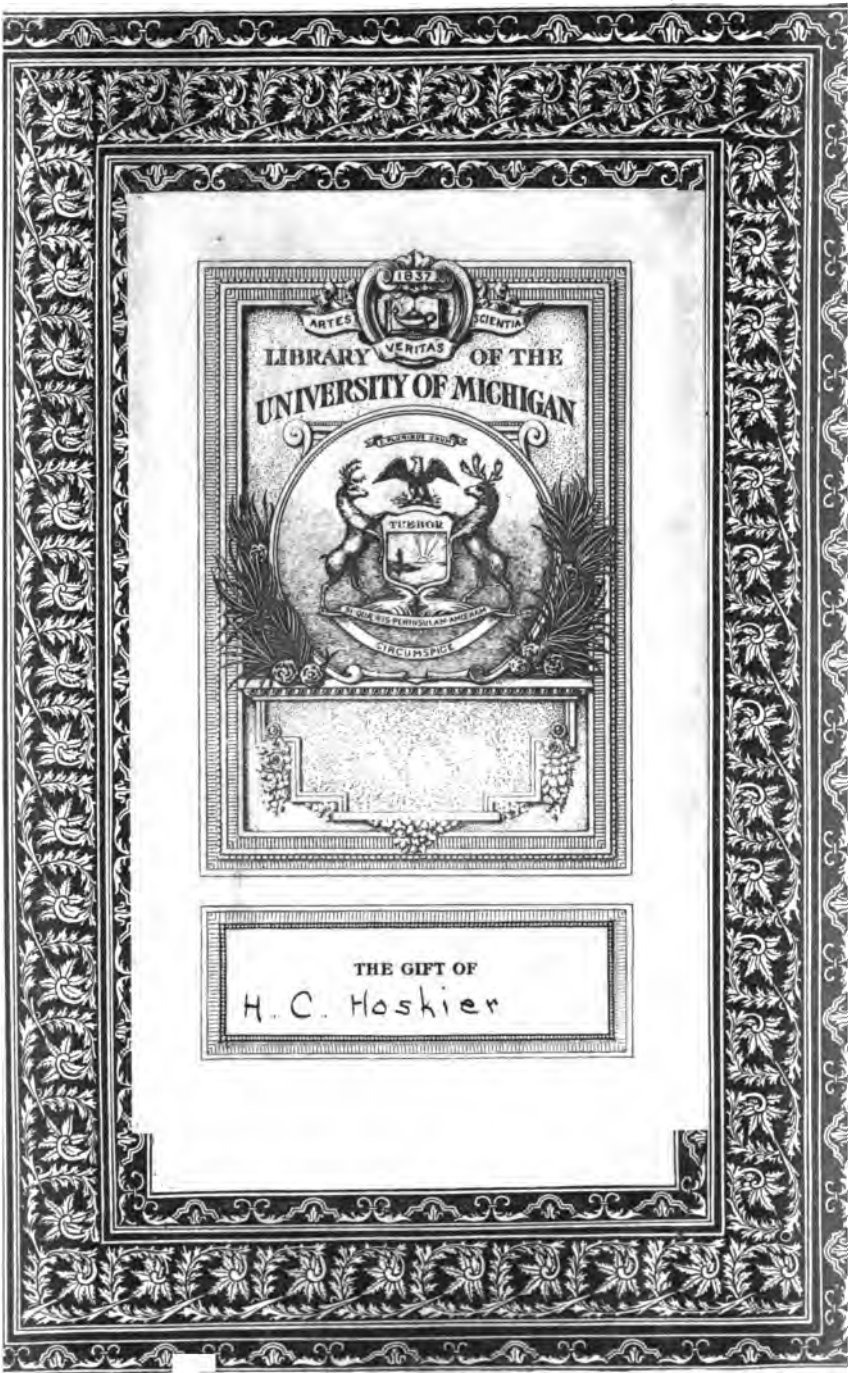
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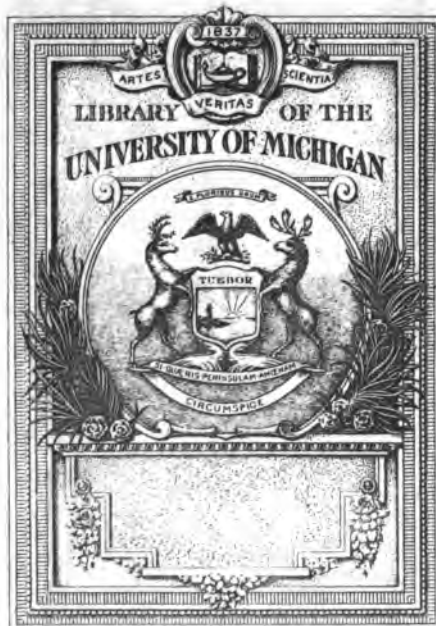
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PREFACE.

IN adding a life of Correggio to the series of Biographies of Great Artists, I wish to say a few words as to the way in which my work has been carried out.

I have felt throughout my inability to write any artistic criticism, and when such criticism has seemed necessary I have generally confined myself to quoting the opinions of more competent authorities. For this, and also for the somewhat meagre details of his life, I have followed as closely as possible in the steps of Dr. Meyer, the well-known German critic.

My aim has been to gather together the few facts known of this great painter's life, with a brief notice of all his chief works. If, in addition to this, I have succeeded in expressing in any degree the wonderful charm I have myself felt in the paintings of this master, who is emphatically one of the greatest of colourists, and in inducing in the reader a desire to know more of his works, I shall be amply satisfied.

M. C. H.

June 1882.

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CORREGGIO.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION—VISIT TO MANTUA—INFLUENCE OF MANTEGNA, OF LEONARDO AND OF FRANCA—EARLY WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.

A.D. 1494—1514.

IN writing a life of ANTONIO ALLEGRI, who is always known by the name of his birthplace, CORREGGIO, the biographer has to begin by disproving many of the statements that have until now been most generally received respecting him. Very little is known with certainty of the life of this great painter, and, as if to make amends for the paucity of trustworthy information, tradition has been doubly busy with his name. Dr. Meyer however in his valuable work¹ has greatly simplified the labour of succeeding biographers. He gives us a curious chapter on the various accounts that have been given from time to time of Correggio's life; and by his careful investigations he has at length cleared away the

¹ "Correggio." Von Julius Meyer. Leipzig, 1871.

remains of the mass of falsehood, which had accumulated around the memory of the great master. He has also vindicated his character from the heavy charges of melancholy and avarice brought against it, and has shown him to us—not bowed down by the weight of poverty, oppressed by the cares of his family, and dying at last from the effects of extreme parsimony learnt during his life-long struggle to obtain the means of living—but in his true position of a respectable, middle-class citizen, provided with all the necessaries, if not with all the luxuries of life and able to make use of the most costly materials for his art and to leave a sufficient maintenance to his children at his early death.

Not a single account seems to have been written of Correggio by any one who was personally acquainted with him, or who had good opportunities for learning his history from his fellow-citizens and contemporaries. The earlier writers, with Vasari at their head, give us only vague and second-hand reports. They doubtless looked with the more pity on his humble and unpretentious mode of life from what they saw of the splendid position of the great painters at the Pontifical court. Later writers added fresh tragic tones to the picture, until we find him, under the pen of Resta, wandering poor and unknown through the cities of Italy, leaving everywhere unappreciated proofs of his genius. In Germany at a later period he became the hero of a tragedy in which he is overwhelmed by calamity after calamity. In the eighteenth century an effort was made to raise him in the social scale by tracing his descent from an ancient and noble house. But this attempt has also failed, and Correggio has finally taken the less romantic, but equally honourable rank, of a respectable citizen of one of the smaller towns in Italy.

That the family of the great painter was not in indigent cir-

cumstances we learn from the most trustworthy, though, alas ! most uninteresting guide we have to help us through the maze of traditions in which the biographer of Correggio is in danger of being bewildered—the guide being none other than the legal documents and parish registers preserved in his birthplace.

Pellegrino Allegri, the father of Antonio, belonged to a family of that name long established in the small town of Correggio, about twenty-four miles east of Parma. His wife, who brought him a small dowry of 100 lire, was Bernardina Piazzola, of the Ormani or Aromani family. In 1516, Pellegrino purchased a clothier's business, and soon afterwards, in conjunction with a certain Vincenzo Mariani, he farmed two estates, for which he paid a yearly rental of 150 gold ducats, worth probably about 225*l.* at the present value of money.² A few years later, on his daughter's marriage with this same Vincenzo, he paid the sum of 100 golden scudi as dowry, and in his will, made in 1538, he bequeathed to the daughter of his son Antonio 250 gold scudi.

Our friend the parish register fails us at the outset, being unable to tell us the exact day of Antonio Allegri's birth, as it only dates from 1495, while the great painter was born in the year 1494. Pellegrino seems to have intended his son to follow one of the learned professions, and with this view had him instructed in the usual elements of education by Giovanni Berni, and in rhetoric and poetry by a professor from Modena named Battista Marastoni, who had settled at Correggio. The father's plans were, however, frustrated: the

² There is some difficulty in estimating either the relative value or the equivalent worth at the present time of the Italian coins of the sixteenth century. It varied in different towns. Roughly speaking a ducat was worth about five lire. A scudo was equivalent to a ducat, which was equal to about five English shillings or about thirty shillings of our present money.

young Antonio early developed a strong taste for painting, and the father wisely yielded and allowed the boy to follow the bent of his genius. It was not a new profession in the family, for a brother of Pellegrino, named Lorenzo, was a painter, though apparently but a very inferior one.

In the studio of this uncle, Antonio probably acquired the first principles of art. The science however, which he afterwards applied in a masterly manner, was studied under Giambattista Lombardi, formerly professor of Philosophy and Medicine in Ferrara and Bologna, but at this time president of a small academy or literary society established by Veronica Gambara, the second wife of Ghiberto of Correggio, in that town. The high opinion entertained of Lombardi in Correggio is shown by the fact that he was appointed one of the regency, when the Count quitted the town in 1511, in order to escape the plague. Under this competent master Antonio studied philosophy, mathematics, anatomy, and optics, and it is pleasant to find that master and pupil remained firm friends through life.³

The question as to who was Antonio's master is much disputed, and we will merely state the various opinions, without troubling our readers with the arguments on either side—especially as they are not susceptible of proof. The usual, and apparently most probable idea is that supported by Bigi, the latest Italian biographer, that he studied under Antonio Bartolotti or Bartolozzi, at this time head of the school of art in Correggio. Dr. Meyer however adopts the opinion of Mengs, which is that he was a pupil of

³ One proof of the good understanding between them is that in 1513 Lombardi presented Antonio Allegri with a geographical codex by Berlinghieri, with the names of both himself and his pupil inscribed on one of the pages.

Francesco Bianchi, called Ferrari—a painter, of the school of Francia at Modena—who died in 1510. A third view is held by Mr. J. A. Crowe, who thinks that Allegri may have studied in Parma, where his greatest works have been left, and “where Cima di Conegliano at one time cultivated an art that was subsequently confounded with that of Leonardo, and where many pupils of the Paduan school practised on the Mantuan lines which recur in the earlier efforts of Correggio.” However this may be, it was not for long that Allegri remained in any studio, as in the beginning of 1511—his seventeenth year—he was back in Correggio, signing his name in the baptismal records at the baptism of one of the Vizarini family.

There is strong internal evidence to be found in Allegri's paintings that he was influenced not only by Francia in the formation of his manner, but also by Mantegna. Some of the most remarkable characteristics of his style are first seen in Mantegna. The realistic effects of his backgrounds and of the figures flying in space foreshortened from the point of sight of the spectator, are features peculiar to the school of Mantegna and were almost unknown to the great artists of Florence and Rome.

It was at Mantua that Allegri must have been brought under the influence of Mantegna. In 1511, his native town was desolated by the plague—that terrible scourge of Italy during the middle ages. Pellegrino Allegri was one of those who succeeded in making his escape with his family, before the stern quarantine laws had made such an escape illegal.⁴

⁴ Bigi accepts the assertion of the earlier Italian biographer Pungileoni, that Antonio went to Mantua in the suite of Manfredi, Count of Correggio, but Dr. Meyer, the severer German critic, considers that Pungileoni fails to prove his case, and that Manfredi knew probably but little of the young student at this time.

Mantua, at that time, only five years after the death of Andrea Mantegna, was filled with works of art, by that master and his immediate followers. The Gonzaga family had caused their own palace and the palace of St. Sebastian to be adorned with the finest of Mantegna's paintings. Besides these there were the magnificent collections of sculpture made by former marquises, to which had been added the pictures, cameos and other treasures collected by Isabella d'Este. These works of art and especially the paintings of Mantegna must have opened a new world to the young student. He was now old enough and sufficiently advanced to be able to obtain the full benefit of Mantegna's teaching. We do not know if he had direct lessons from Francesco, the son of the great master; but as, even in his earliest known works, there is no trace of direct imitation of Mantegna, and there is much of other influence brought to bear on him at the same time, it seems more reasonable to suppose that he studied independently of any master from the many masterpieces before him.

This sojourn at Mantua could not have been a very short one. His family probably returned to Correggio after the cessation of the plague, leaving Antonio to pursue his studies alone. It would be deeply interesting to know more of this time at Mantua, but our whole information respecting it is to be found in the great painter's subsequent works. These indeed show clearly the deep effect made on him at this time, and also help us to conjecture what other influences were at work on him simultaneously with that of Mantegna.

The Marquis Francesco Gonzaga, a passionate lover of art, had in 1507, invited to his court the Ferrarese painter Lorenzo Costa, a pupil of Francia, and much thought of in Bologna. Both Dr. Meyer and Mr. Crowe consider that

Allegri must have associated much with Costa. The influence of Francia would therefore (once more, if he had ever been subjected to it in Modena,) be brought to bear on the young painter; and the classic severity of Mantegna's manner, at the very time when it was producing its full effect, would be modified by the grace of the earlier master.

There is another possibility with regard to this time on which we should much like more information. It is suggested by the question as to where and when Allegri learned so much of Leonardo da Vinci's manner. We know of no time when the two great masters could have met, or of any work by Leonardo that Correggio could have seen; and yet that he *did* see some of them, even if he did not actually meet their author, admits almost of demonstration. In no other master of the time could Correggio have seen anything of the science of chiaroscuro, with which he afterwards produced such marvellous effects. And yet in his very earliest known works, he shows the power of chiaroscuro and employs it with skilfulness ever increasing, until he at last produces his marvellous *Notte*, the night scene of the Nativity. Without the aid of Leonardo, it is scarcely possible that even Correggio could so soon have mastered so difficult an art. Dr. Meyer suggests that in some of the short visits that Leonardo was in the habit of paying from Florence to Milan, he may have visited Mantua and Modena.⁵

⁵ It is after this visit to Mantua that some biographers introduce a visit to Rome. The earlier writers Vasari and Lanzi both state positively that Allegri never was in Rome, and the contrary assertion seems to have arisen in a curious way. In the latter part of the seventeenth century an Italian priest, Father Resta, made a collection of drawings by unknown artists. To enhance their value he fixed upon Correggio as their author, and then set himself to the difficult task of proving their authenticity, although they were in different styles and

It is always interesting to trace the separate steps towards perfection of the great masters. Many efforts have therefore been made to determine the earliest works of Correggio. Pungileoni thinks that some frescoes which he had seen in a palace built by Francesca of Brandenburg in 1507, had been partly painted by Allegri. Nothing however remains of them now. They are described as possessing some resemblance to his later works, particularly one cupola—probably imitated from Mantegna's frescoes at Mantua—with figures foreshortened from beneath. Tiraboschi gives a tradition current in his time in Correggio, that Allegri's first work was in a palace erected by Count Niccolò in the fifteenth century, and adorned with frescoes by order of Veronica Gambara. The palace had totally disappeared even in Tiraboschi's time, so here we have even less to judge by. That he did some work here however is rendered probable by what is said in the manuscript chronicle of Lucio Zuccardi at the beginning of the seventeenth century: "In those days there lived one Antonio Allegri, an excellent artist, who painted the palace outside the town which was the residence of Charles V."

came from different parts of Italy. He devised a long and pathetic story of the painter's wanderings from town to town, and at last makes him pass the years 1517 to 1520 at Rome, where he leaves sketches, to be afterwards collected by the said Resta. He succeeded in gaining credence for his tale, but in order to establish it beyond a doubt, he wrote to a priest in Correggio asking him to obtain the signature of some of the chief citizens to a document which he enclosed. This document purported to be a statement by an old woman of ninety, that she had heard it asserted by another woman equally old, who in her turn had received it from a third, who had learned from the painter's wife that Antonio Allegri had been to Rome to study painting. The story reminds us of the House that Jack built, and we are glad to hear that the good burghers of Correggio refused to give their authority to such old wives' fables.

This, no doubt, was the palace built by Count Niccolò, which is described as having been in the suburbs. If Allegri did really help to adorn this palace with his work, it must have been between the years 1516 and 1518, after his return from Mantua and before he went to Parma, as his time afterwards is fully accounted for. In this case Veronica Gambara must have had the sagacity and honour to recognize the talent of the young painter, before he was generally appreciated. He certainly did not receive commissions from her at a later time, but, after the death of her husband in 1518, she may not have been able to do much for him.

Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, Allegri's residence at Mantua has been accepted as a fact. Diligent search has therefore been repeatedly made in the town records and the church history of that town for some mention of the young student. All was in vain however, and conjecture has fastened on the most probable traces, only to be obliged to give them up again. Among these were several paintings in the vestibule of the church of Sant' Andrea, in the style of Mantegna. These are now pronounced to be by Francesco, the son of Mantegna. A portrait of the Marchese Francesca Gonzaga has also been attributed to him, but it is most unlikely that such a commission would have been given to a mere boy completely unknown to fame. We may safely conclude then that, while in that town, Antonio devoted himself wholly to study, and did not attempt to obtain commissions.

Very few paintings remain which can, with any probability, be attributed to Allegri before he appears as a master. Dr. Meyer enumerates several, but casts grave doubts on the authenticity of all. One, which seems to have been probably one of his earliest pictures, was brought over to England,

where it has disappeared, and is now only known by copies. This was of the *Young Man on the Mount of Olives*, who took to flight when our Lord was made prisoner. The copies are pronounced to be in the Correggesque manner, allowing for the youth of the painter. Another painting which is probably genuine is now in the possession of the Duke of Sutherland. It represents two laden mules and a driver passing through beautiful scenery. It is unlike Allegrì's usual style, but may have been done as a sign-board for an inn. Tradition says that it was painted to pay his reckoning when his purse was empty. The *Portrait of a Doctor*, in the Dresden Gallery is also ascribed to him. Almost the only circumstance in favour of the authenticity of this portrait is that it came from the collection of the Dukes of Modena: it has few distinctive traits of Correggio's manner. Pungileoni supposes it to be a portrait of his old master and friend Lombardi. Very few other portraits have been ascribed to Correggio, and it is believed that none is genuine.





CHAPTER II.

ALTAR-PIECE FOR THE FRANCISCANS—OTHER EARLY MASTER-PIECES—"MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE"—PARMA IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY—THE CONVENT OF SAN PAOLO AND THE CAMERA OF CORREGGIO—DEATH OF HIS UNCLE—LAWSUIT—MARRIAGE—BIRTH OF HIS CHILDREN—EASEL PICTURES—"LA ZINGARELLA"—"MADONNA DELLA CESTA"—OTHER MADONNAS—PURCHASE OF A HOUSE IN CORREGGIO—"ECCE HOMO"—"CHRIST ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES."

A. D. 1514—1621.

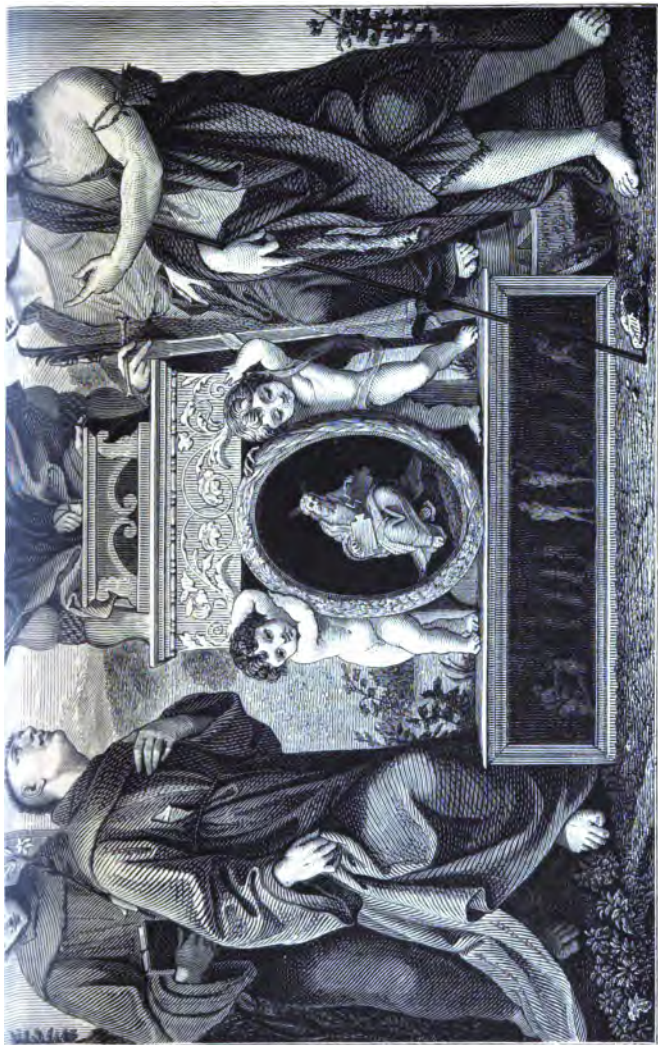
ALLEGRI had not long to wait before his talent met with recognition in his own town. The earliest of his undisputed works is a proof of this. A document still in existence, bearing the date July 4th, 1514, states that Quirino Zuccardi bequeathed a house to the convent of the Franciscan Minorites, on condition that they had an altar-piece painted for the adjoining church. It was afterwards arranged that the heir-at-law of Zuccardi should take the house, and pay the Franciscans a sum of money sufficient for the picture. Thus provided with the requisite funds, the brothers

naturally looked out for the best painter to be found in the neighbourhood ; and that their choice fell on the young Antonio Allegri, now twenty years of age, shows both their discernment and also the reputation already acquired by the young master. All the documents relating to this first master-work have been carefully preserved. The agreement with the painter was made August 30th, 1514, by which he was to receive 100 ducats, one half to be paid at once, according to the custom of the time, and the other half when the work was completed. As Antonio was a minor, his father's name is also appended to the agreement. The work was however not begun immediately. This is shown by the agreement for the panel, on which it was to be painted, and which was promised for Nov. 4th. In the convent books an entry of April 4th, 1515, records the payment of the second half of the money, showing that the work was then finished. It must then have taken about six months.

This altar-piece is the celebrated *Madonna of St. Francis* of the Dresden Gallery. It is on this picture—executed before Allegri's style was thoroughly formed—that the various theories as to his early masters have been founded. Dr. Meyer finds in it a resemblance to a painting by Bianchi in the Louvre, which represents a Madonna seated on a pedestal holding the Infant, and with a saint on each side, and where, as in Allegri's *St. Francis*, there are medallions in *grisaille* on the base of the pedestal. Pungileoni finds in the same picture a resemblance to the altar-piece painted by Bartolotti in 1511, representing the Madonna with SS. Francis and Quirinus, now in the Estense Gallery at Modena. Whatever theories however may be founded on it, all critics agree as to the merits of this first master-work. The Madonna is represented seated on a throne placed on a







MADONNA AND SAINTS. BY CORREGGIO.
In the Dresden Gallery.

raised pedestal and holding the Divine Infant with one hand, while the other is extended in blessing over the head of St. Francis. The throne is placed under an arch, supported on either side by a column, and through the open archway is seen an undulating landscape. A ring of faint cherubs' heads encircles the Madonna, while below her stand on one side St. Francis with St. Anthony of Padua, and on the other St. John the Baptist and St. Catherine with a sword and palm-branch. The high price paid for this altar-piece shows in what consideration the young artist was held.

This picture differs much in some respects from Allegri's subsequent works, and in one point the later pictures contrast disadvantageously with it, as in this we find more religious sentiment than in his later works, though accompanied by a certain conventionality afterwards entirely discarded by him.

Another smaller painting belonging to this time is the *Repose in Egypt*. Of this work Bigi says that "it forms an epoch in the life of Correggio, because, in the opinion of all connoisseurs, it is the passage between the Mantegnesque and the really Correggesque styles." The original of this work is usually supposed to be the one in the Tribune of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, and in the catalogue of that collection no doubt is expressed as to its genuineness, but it is certainly doubtful. Dr. Meyer pronounces that the composition of this painting is undoubtedly by Allegri, but that the colours are too glaring, and the figures somewhat too heavy to allow of its having been painted by him. He therefore pronounces it to be an old copy.

Several other pictures have been attributed to this period, but, as they have disappeared, we will not enter into the controversies regarding them. Amongst these, however, we

can hardly place a painting executed in 1517, which represents *St. Martha in company with St. Peter, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Leonard*. No record has been preserved of the fate of this picture, unless, as many suppose, it is identical with the one attributed to Correggio in Lord Ashburton's collection, and known as *St. Peter, St. Mary Magdalen, St. Margaret and St. Anthony of Padua*. This seems highly probable, as the latter agrees in all respects with the account that Lanzi gives of the former. Dr. Waagen, in his "Treasures of Art in Great Britain," pronounces it to be probably a work of Correggio's early period, although it differs in some respects from his usual style.

That Allegri's style was at this time rapidly maturing, is shown by an undoubtedly authentic work, belonging probably to 1517, the *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, of which there are three replicas or copies. Of these three, that in the Louvre is undoubtedly genuine, and differs in some points from the two others, which however are not identical. One is at Naples, the other in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. Dr. Meyer points out that it would not be surprising if Allegri did in reality repeat this subject several times, as it was one thoroughly in accordance with the special character of his genius, but there are some doubts expressed as to the genuineness of the St. Petersburg painting: Waagen considers it a pupil's copy of the Naples picture, although there is an inscription on the back (which may however have been added at a later time) stating it to have been painted by Antonio Lieto da Correggio,¹ for Donna Matilda d'Este in 1517. The three

¹ Correggio, following the fashion of his time, often Latinized his name. As *allegro* means joyous in Italian, he frequently signs himself by the Latin equivalent *laetus*, or even by the Italian *lieto*.

pictures differ in some respects, but those of Naples and St. Petersburg are almost identical. There are several stories told of their origin, but, as they are absolutely destitute of proof, the reader may accept them or not as he pleases. The most



THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE. BY CORREGGIO.
In the Louvre.

probable seems that in which the *St. Catherine* is painted as a wedding present for his sister Catherine on her marriage with Vincenzo Mariani. She appears to have been married in 1519 and the probable date of the picture is 1518. Another

version of the tale represents it to have been given as a mark of gratitude to a lady named Catherine, who had nursed the painter through a severe illness.

Of another work supposed to have been painted in the same year, 1518, not a trace now remains; it was an altarpiece, representing the *Birth of the Virgin*, given to the parish church of Albinea by Giudotto di Rincopò. LJ

The time between 1513 and 1518 appears to have been passed by Allegri in Correggio and its immediate neighbourhood. These years must certainly have been devoted to hard work, for his progress in his art is marvellous, although little remains to show the steps by which he advanced. In the early part of 1518 however he went to Parma. This seems to have been the first time that he remained for any length of time in that city where he was destined to leave such memorable works. He now went by invitation to execute a commission for the Abbess of the Convent of San Paolo.

Before entering on the subject of Allegri's works in Parma, perhaps it will be as well to make a short digression to show in what circumstances the city then was.

The old Etruscan town of Parma was at this period a prize eagerly coveted by each of the great Powers who in turn ravaged the fertile plains and rich cities of poor Italy. Her rich meadows, fat cattle and the silk for which she is still noted caused her to be looked upon as a very desirable possession by the Pope, the King of France, and the Emperor of Germany. Ever since the fall of the Western Empire, Parma had been under the dominion of an endless succession of foreign masters. During the wars with the Empire she generally sided with the Popes, and the Emperor Frederick II. was defeated under her walls by a coalition of Italian

towns in which Parma took a prominent part. The city was taken by the French during the invasion of Louis XII., but was recovered by Pope Julius II. and added to the dominions of the Papal See in 1512. Leo X., who succeeded to the Pontificate in 1513, bent upon the aggrandizement of his own family, was trying to arrange a kingdom for his brother Giuliano in the north of Italy, the nucleus of which was to be Parma, Piacenza, Reggio, and Modena. After the defeat of his allies, the Swiss, however, at Marignano in 1515, Leo was forced to give up Parma and Piacenza to Francis I.; and Parma enjoyed a few years of troubled rest under the foreign yoke before the French were finally expelled from the Milanese and adjoining towns by the coalition of Leo X. with Charles V. in the year 1521. It was therefore during the French occupation of Parma that Allegri first settled there, and, as we shall presently see, his labours there were at one time much hindered by the disordered state of the country.

Parma, notwithstanding its many changes of rulers, would seem to be comparatively little altered from what it was in the sixteenth century. It would even seem that the railway-station outside the Porta Santa Barnaba had made but little difference to the quiet, rather sleepy town, as the great stream of passengers and tourists passes on to Bologna, without caring to stop to examine the many treasures concealed beneath the cupolas of the Cathedral and Church of San Giovanni Evangelista, and in the Ducal Palace.

The streets, piazzas, principal churches, rambling and somewhat dilapidated old Palace, and venerable Cathedral and Baptistery (one of the finest in Italy) look much the same now, as when the young artist approached the city by the

straight, dusty road from Reggio and passed under the Porta San Michele and along the wide street which divides the town into two parts. The bridge then, as now, spanned the shallow river Parma (a small tributary of the Po), with its many sand-banks only hidden in a time of flood when the yellow, turbid waters rush rapidly by, almost filling the low arches and threatening to carry the bridge away bodily with it. The convent of San Paolo, where Allegri was to begin his labours in Parma, is in the Via Santa Lucia, a quiet side-street near the Piazza, where stand grouped together the Cathedral, Baptistery and Church of San Giovanni.

When Allegri came to Parma there was no master of any celebrity in the town. No doubt the constant change of government and the foreign rulers, whom it then served, made Parma an undesirable abode for artists. Only residents in the town, or those who had been long settled there, would be seen within its walls. Accordingly we find that in 1518, the greatest masters—Cristoforo Caselli, a pupil of Giovanni Bellini, and Lodovico da Parma, a painter of the school of Francia—were past their prime, whilst Alessandro Araldi, also an old man, having been born about 1465, and one whose decorative works adorn another room of the same convent, was only great in decoration, as his outlines are too hard for figures. The Mazzola family, Michele, Pierilario and Filippo (the last the father of Parmigiano) were also in Parma, but the elder generation never attained to any great distinction, and the younger members of the family adopted the manner of the new master.

The nuns of San Paolo enjoyed a strange kind of celebrity at this time. Since the days of Frederick II. they had possessed special privileges, and among others that of being independent of their bishop. The fact of the abbess thus

possessing almost unlimited power made the position much sought for by ladies belonging to noble families; and dire was the jealousy among not merely the rival candidates, but also among their friends and relations. So notorious had become the disorders in the convent that both Julius II. and Leo X. placed it under ecclesiastical restraint, thinking thus to put an end to the scandal; but the sisters, with the abbess at their head, quietly refused obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors and matters went on as before. In 1507, Giovanna, daughter of the patrician Marco Piacenza, was elected. This lady fully kept up the reputation already possessed by the sisterhood by her love of luxury and determination to have her own way in everything. Her first measure did not certainly show any signs of a conciliatory policy. This was to remove the custody of the convent estates from a Garimberti, whose family had long held that office, and to give it to a relation of her own. The Garimberti family, naturally loath to relinquish so profitable a charge, seems to have resisted the decree of the new abbess, and one of them was murdered by the new inspector aided by the brother of the abbess.

Such was the lady who now called in to her assistance the rising master from Correggio. She had been for some time past engaged in building new apartments for her private use, and did not feel at all inclined to restrict herself to the religious subjects ordained by custom as befitting a convent. The fashion of the day turned to mythology, and from mythology she drew the subjects for the decoration of her rooms. She obtained the help of the best artists within her reach. For an architect she chose Giorgio da Erbe; for a sculptor Francesco da Grate, and for a painter Alessandro Araldi. With the last; however, the Abbess does not

appear to have been satisfied, as for the last room she took the work from him and entrusted it, as we have seen, to Allegri.

This commission must have been doubly gratifying to Correggio on account of the honour and emolument to be acquired from it, and also of the subject being strictly in accordance with his own tastes. His genius was so essentially original that it was very difficult for him to be bound by the strict rules of conventionality in any subject. We have seen his marvellous power, while a very young man, of learning the secrets of other masters' success and making them his own without the least tendency to servile copying. In conventional religious pictures it was most difficult to be entirely original. He therefore boldly threw aside all conventionality and in the sacred subjects, which constant demand obliged him to undertake, he almost wholly confined his attention to attaining the greatest physical beauty possible, while rendering spiritual significance a secondary object.

The reaction, shared by most of the great painters of the time from the earlier style where spiritual significance was of primary importance, was due no doubt in a great degree to the general awakening and revolt against the load of superstition with which the Christian world was laden in the beginning of the sixteenth century. In Germany and England it produced the Reformation; in Italy, where many would-be Reformers were unheeded or sternly repressed, there came in, with the new freedom of thought, a flood of incredulity and licence and, in some instances, almost a return to Paganism—in words at all events. Correggio seems deeply to have felt this influence of the time. He paints religious subjects, but they are treated in an increasingly secular manner, and he

appears glad to escape from what he felt to be the trammels of sacred art into the realms of mythology.

In the dining-room of the lady-abbess, Correggio is com-



"PUTTI." BY CORREGGIO.

From the frescoes in the Convent of San Paolo, Parma.

pletely in his own element. Dr. Meyer says of him :
"Correggio was innocently and unconsciously a born

heathen" and he revels amongst the gods and goddesses of classic story which the lady had chosen for this room.

It was a square vaulted room imperfectly lighted by two small casement windows on either side of the large high fireplace. Over this fireplace, Allegri placed the exquisite picture which was to give the key-note to the whole room—*Diana returning from the Chase*. The goddess is represented in the act of mounting her car while it is moving at full speed drawn by two white does, whose hind legs alone are visible. The wind catches her mantle, and her knees are still bent in the act of springing lightly to her place, while her face is turned to the spectator.

The vaulted ceiling is in sixteen compartments separated by gilded flutings which are united in the centre by a key-stone or rose, showing the arms and initials of the Abbess surrounded by a wreath. The sixteen divisions between the raised flutings are somewhat hollowed out, and are each filled with trellis work, on which vines are trained, and from which hang clusters of grapes. In each division is an opening and through these the blue sky is visible, forming a background to a group of children—two, sometimes three, charming little *putti* romping in the most unconstrained attitudes. They appear to have stolen some of the goddess's hunting implements, and are thoroughly enjoying a game with her horns, bows and dogs. Beneath these are semicircular lunettes with one or more figures taken from mythology and bearing but little on the general subject of the room. These are all in grey. A frieze is formed by a border of loose cloths attached to consoles below each lunette, and bearing dishes and goblets. This would seem to indicate that the apartment was to be used as a dining-room.

All the paintings in the room are in remarkably good

preservation—a fact no doubt partly owing to its having been long shut up.

At the death of Giovanna in 1574 the Convent was placed under ecclesiastical authority. It was cloistered up, and for more than two hundred years it was almost impossible for any one to penetrate into the rooms where such treasures lay concealed. Vague rumours were current that there were paintings of great value in the Convent, and the Carracci tried hard to obtain admittance, but in vain. Mengs however saw them and gives a description of the paintings in this room in a letter to a friend. Tiraboschi was unsuccessful in obtaining a sight of the pictures and owes the full description of them, which he gives, to a friend—a painter named Antonio Bresciani, who, when engaged in some work in the Convent Chapel, found an opportunity of inspecting the concealed treasures. Tiraboschi's account of them excited the attention of those who were interested in art, and in 1794 the Academy of Parma obtained the long desired permission to examine the paintings. A deputation, consisting of all the professors of the Academy, accompanied by the engraver Rosaspina, accordingly entered the Convent and inspected the paintings. They were unanimous in pronouncing them to be the work of Correggio. A long description of the paintings with a full account of the discovery was afterwards written by Affò.²

The fame of the young painter was now firmly established in Parma, as well as in the immediate neighbourhood of Correggio. Commissions came in more quickly, and there was no fear of want of work. His fortunes too seemed improving

² Since the suppression of the Convent, the *Camera di San Paolo*, as it is called, has been thrown open, and the visitors have now only to ask for the key of the Academy to obtain free admission to the once jealously-guarded treasures.

in other ways. In February 1519 his maternal uncle Francesco Ormani bequeathed all his property, including a house in the Borgo Vecchio of Correggio and several acres of land in the same district, to "his excellent nephew Antonio Allegri as a reward for his merits and for the pecuniary assistance he had afforded in the necessities of his uncle, as well as being a proof of the esteem in which the donor held his mind and heart."

The uncle died May 4th of the same year, but the artist did not peacefully enter into his heritage. The will was disputed by a member of the Ormani family, who had expected to benefit by it, and on December 10th, 1521, it was agreed to refer the question to two umpires. The umpires however did not aid matters, as one decided in favour of each claimant, and no choice was left but an appeal to the law. The lawsuit dragged on until 1528, and was then only terminated by order of Manfredo, Lord of Correggio, who decreed a division of the property. Romanello, who had begun the suit was now dead, but his sister received as her share the house and fields in the Borgo Vecchio, and Antonio Allegri an estate belonging to the district of Correggio. Antonio afterwards purchased the land, and very possibly the house also, as in 1550, long after his death, his son sold a house in the Borgo Vecchio.

In the course of this year 1519, Allegri must have paid frequent visits home. His uncle's deed of gift in February bears his signature, as well as two documents in September. His sister's marriage too, probably took place during this year and was quickly followed by his own. He was however occupied with commissions in Parma between these visits, but it is not surprising, considering the numerous interruptions he must have had, that there are not many paintings of that time left.

The young girl whom he married was Girolama Francesca, daughter of Bartolommeo Merlini di Braghetis, (armbearer to the Marchese of Mantua,) who had fallen in the battle of Taro in 1503. The bride was only sixteen, and we are very possibly familiar with her face and form in some one of the many lovely Madonnas and saints that Correggio painted at this time. But although a later tradition points to one of these, of which we shall speak presently, as her portrait yet it is—as usual with regard to all that interests us in Correggio—the merest guess-work.

Girolama brought him in dowry the not inconsiderable sum for those days, of the value of 263 ducats in land, and the half of a house valued at 60 ducats. It was not until July 21st, 1521, however, that business affairs connected with this dowry were settled, and in the meantime Girolama had monetary transactions with an uncle Giovanni Merlini, who would appear to have been trustee. Some time elapsed before Antonio derived any benefit from her fortune, as the property was not divided until January 1523, and then a part of Girolama's share was claimed by some relations, and a fresh lawsuit was needed to establish her right.

After his marriage, Allegri was obliged to return to Parma to execute some commissions, leaving his wife in Correggio, where she was detained by the business with her uncle. Her first child Pomponio was born at Correggio on September 3rd, 1521, and his father's old friend Lombardi stood godfather to him. The second child, a daughter, Francesca Litizia, was probably born after the wife had gone to live with her husband, in Parma, as we find that one of her godfathers was Giovanni Garbazzi, physician to the convent of San Giovanni. This daughter was afterwards married to a certain Pompeo Brunorio. The third

child, a son, who died young, was born at Parma in 1526 ; and the fourth, Anna Geria, was also born at Parma in 1527.

Whether it be true or not that Allegri, as so many artists did, took his wife and children for models, we may feel quite sure that he loved children, for no one could have depicted the grace of childhood as he has done, without feeling affection towards them. He thought, with all lovers of children, that their mirth jars less on the feelings in sad or solemn scenes than that of older persons, and he never hesitates to introduce their gambols even in the most solemn of his sacred pictures.

Most of the genuine easel pictures by Correggio belong to the years 1519-21: they are chiefly small paintings representing the Madonna with the Infant Jesus and St. John the Baptist. For these, Allegri probably found a rapid sale, and the subject was forced on him by the demand. That he did not himself prefer the conventional type of religious painting, is clearly shown by the greater originality and freshness thrown into his works, when he has greater liberty in the subject. These Madonnas have much similarity in composition, and they were probably painted as rapidly as was consistent with the most careful finish, and with his other engagements. A traveller writing in 1587 says that he saw in many towns of Lombardy works by Correggio, carefully treasured. This would show that orders came to him from a distance and that his name was becoming known beyond Parma, though probably few commissions came from wealthy connoisseurs in art.

Two large Madonnas have been ascribed to this time, but it seems doubtful if either of them was really by Correggio. One of these, a *Madonna with the four Patron Saints of Parma*, bought by Duke Melzi of Milan, Dr. Meyer pro-

nounces to be more than doubtful. The other was one that Mengs mentions as having seen in the Pitti Palace in Florence, a *Madonna* holding the Infant in her arms and St. Christopher standing by about to take Him on his shoulder. Mengs thought that the composition was in Correggio's style but not the execution. The *Noli me tangere* of the Madrid collection is generally thought to be authentic, but even this is not quite beyond suspicion. It represents the meeting between our Lord and St. Mary Magdalen after the Resurrection. The scene is placed in a richly wooded country, and the two figures are radiant with health and beauty. The figure of our Lord, however, has given rise to some doubts, as it is scarcely equal to Correggio's usual work, but this would not be enough to discredit the authenticity of the picture if its history could be clearly traced. This unfortunately is not the case, as it has passed through many hands. One of its possessors was shocked with the scanty clothing of the Magdalen, and covered her up with a thick coating of paint. This has been since removed, but it doubtless adds to the difficulty of deciding the real authorship.

The *Madonna adoring the Infant Jesus*, the well-known picture in the Tribune of the Uffizi at Florence, is the only indisputable work by our master in that city so rich in masterpieces of most of the Italian painters. It is not in his latest style, and must have been executed before the grand frescoes in San Giovanni. Mengs considers the painting of the face and hands of the *Madonna* to be weaker than in most of Allegri's works, but it is difficult to criticize it severely in Florence, where there are no other works by the same hand with which to compare it. It is certainly a charming little picture, though not by any means

the one that would have been chosen to represent Allegri in that cabinet of masterpieces. In this picture Mary is kneeling on a low step in front of the Child, for whom she has formed a little bed with some straw, laid on one end of her own long veil, the rest of which is passed over her head and round her body. Her hands are about to be clasped in adoration. The background of this tranquil scene is filled with a beautiful landscape.

Another of the Madonna pictures of this time is one in the Naples Gallery, known by the name of *La Zingarella* or the Gipsy—from the turban-like head-dress and Eastern costume of the Madonna. It is sometimes called also the *Madonna del Coniglio*, from a little white rabbit, which is sitting up watching the group. If the last-named Madonna can be accused of being too pale in its colouring, that cannot be said here, as the colouring of the *Zingarella* is most brilliant, and the flesh tints are deeper than usual, in accordance with the Eastern character of the picture. The Virgin is sitting under a palm-tree in a lovely landscape, holding the sleeping Child on her lap. She is bending over him, soothed almost into slumber by the tranquil beauty of the scene, while an angel—one of a group that is hovering above them—shades her from the sun with a palm branch. It is this lovely young Madonna that tradition points out as a portrait of the painter's wife, and we are at liberty to believe it, if we like, as history, though it does not confirm, yet does not contradict tradition in this case. But Pomponio her eldest son was not born until 1521 and the picture appears to have been painted in 1520, so, though Allegri may have taken his wife for a model, he could not have painted his son as the divine Infant.

To English readers, the *Madonna della Cesta* in our

own National Gallery, is well known and needs but little description. It probably belongs to the same year 1520, and is a most happy and beautiful picture of family life, although there is but little attempt at religious feeling in it. Joseph is represented in the background engaged in carpentering, while Mary is dressing the Infant. Beside her is the basket filled with working materials, which gives its name to the picture. The *Madonna undressing the Infant Child* which is in the collection of the Marchese Cesare Campari at Modena, may have been intended as a companion picture to this, though there are doubts as to its authenticity.

There seems no particular reason for the general practice of attributing to this time the *Madonna and Child, with St. John the Baptist offering fruit*, of which there are several replicas, all apparently by the master himself. One of these is in the Collection of Prince Torlonia at Rome; another in the Gallery at Buda-Pesth. To the latter is added a little angel with outstretched wings who offers pears and cherries to the Infant; the picture has suffered a good deal from time and from restorations, but it is said that the painting of the hair alone would be enough to mark it as the work of Allegri. Much stress was laid upon the painting of hair at this time, and the contemporaries of Correggio greatly admired his work in this respect. Vasari says: “Among other peculiarities, Correggio had that of painting the hair with great facility, and has shown to later artists the true method, whereby the difficulties of accomplishing this point may be overcome.” The third replica of this Madonna is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg: it is painted on a panel and is narrower and higher than the others. It is in very good preservation and there is no doubt as to its genuineness.

Many more Madonnas bear the name of Correggio and are attributed to this time, in the various collections scattered over Europe, but few can bear the strict tests to which his pictures are now subjected. The origin of most of these was the great and often ignorant demand for "Correggios" in the eighteenth century. The public insisted on having genuine Correggios, and as they were willing to pay for them, they found dealers only too glad to supply as many as they wished—although, unfortunately, no old ones were in the market. A curious illustration of this wilful blindness on the part of purchasers of pictures, is shown in the history of the painting from which Morghen engraved his *Charity*.

In 1786 Christoph Unterberger, a painter at Rome, sold the original picture of this *Charity* to a dealer, as the work of his brother. The dealer however preferred to consider it a Correggio, and persuaded others into that belief. It was engraved by Morghen from a drawing made by Alexander Day, an English miniature painter, then resident in Rome. In 1795 Prince Esterhazy saw it and agreed to pay for it the sum of 1200 ducats, if it proved to be genuine. The question was referred to Ignaz Unterberger, who showed beyond doubt that it was his own work. Even this did not convince every one, and the picture was at length bought by Lord Bristol for 36,000 lire, a sum equal to about 1400*l.* of our money.

The year 1521 was a very unsettled one for Allegri, although he had probably already begun his great works in San Giovanni. We find that he purchased a horse and must have passed much of his time in Correggio, as his signature is attached to the settlement of his wife's dowry on July 26th, 1521. It was in August of this year that the French were driven out of Parma. For a short time the town was

besieged, and Allegri probably remained during that time in his native town, with his young wife, whose first child was born in September. Business-matters also detained him in Parma at this time, as a document proves that he at that time engaged a new advocate in the lawsuit by which he sought to recover the property left him by his uncle. In November he was still in—or possibly had returned to Correggio, as his name appears among the witnesses to a legal document.

Although the great works, of which we shall speak in the next chapter, must have been brought to a standstill during this long absence from Parma, yet some of the easel pictures, of which we have already spoken, would doubtless occupy much of his time. There are also two other paintings of a somewhat different character, which seem also to belong to this time. One of these is the *Ecce Homo*, of the National Gallery. This picture has had a rather singular destiny. Some art-critics are now of opinion that it is only a copy, made by Lodovico Carracci, that we are so carefully guarding among our national treasures, and that, in the admiration excited by this copy, the original has been lost sight of, and has actually disappeared! It is some consolation to think that if it be a copy, it is a copy by a master and was for many years thought to be genuine. It was bought as such by the Marquis of Londonderry of Caroline Bonaparte, the widow of Murat, King of Naples, who had acquired it from Sir Simon Parke, who had bought it. Waagen in his "Treasures of Art in Great Britain," attributes the insipid colouring of some parts to restoration and cleaning. M. Viardot the French critic seems to have been about the first to doubt its genuineness, and others have now come round to his opinion. It is, however, certain that there was a genuine picture, from which this was copied, as the engraving of Agostino Carracci

was taken from the original when in the possession of Count Prati in Parma in 1587.

Correggio has succeeded in this small picture in bringing the whole scene before us with great vividness, but without crowding, and with no unnecessary figures. There are five half-length figures on the canvas. Our Lord stands in the middle, His hands bound and the crown of thorns on His head. This is the weakest part of the composition, as the expression of resignation on His features approaches somewhat to febleness, and, as has been said, the colouring has suffered either in copying or in restorations. Suffering humanity is here represented, but there is nothing to indicate the divine power concealed beneath the suffering body. Behind Him at a window and facing the spectators is Pilate, apparently saying the words: "Behold the man!" On the other side the head of a soldier is just visible, his rough countenance expressive of the deepest pity and gazing reproachfully at Pilate. Immediately under the window of Pilate, the Virgin is supported by St. Mary Magdalen, as she falls back in a dead faint. Her countenance, although at the moment of most utter prostration is wonderfully beautiful and is perhaps the one which gives the deepest touch of pathos to the scene. The other picture of the same kind as this, is the *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, now at Apsley House. This is a small picture, which owes much of its wonderful charm to the effect of the light. As it represents the moment after the Agony in the Garden, it is necessarily a night-scene. A single ray of light falls on the figure of Christ as He kneels in prayer: the agony is over, for the angel has descended to comfort Him, and is pointing with one hand to the cross and with the other to heaven. The light, gently reflected from the white robe of the suffering Master, falls on the sleeping disciples in

the middle distance. As Waagen observes, however, the eye does not become aware of their presence until it turns from the principal group. In the extreme background the soldiers are dimly visible approaching with torches. The first faint streak of dawn is in the horizon behind them. Every detail in the picture is painted with the utmost minuteness, almost as if it were a miniature.

An old tradition asserts, that this work was painted to pay a debt of four scudi to an apothecary. The great labour bestowed on it came from love of the work, and from conscientiousness rather than from greed. This painting was for some time in the possession of the King of Spain, although it has not been clearly traced how it came to him. After the battle of Vittoria it was discovered in the rumble of Joseph Bonaparte's carriage, and was sent back to Ferdinand by the Duke of Wellington. The king however presented it to the Duke and it now forms one of the chief treasures of Apsley House. There is a replica or good copy of it in the National Gallery.





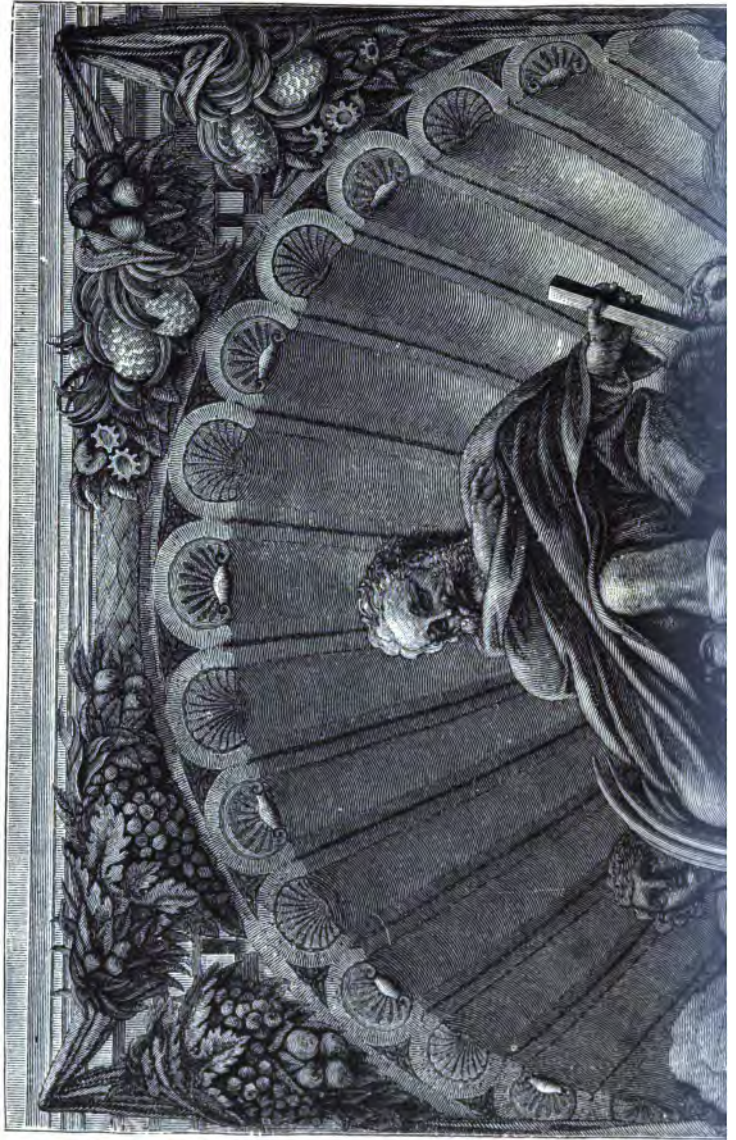
CHAPTER III.

FRESCOES IN SAN GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA, PARMA—"ASCENSION OF CHRIST"—"CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN"—ALTAR-PIECES—"MADONNA DELLA SCALA"—THE DOME OF THE CATHEDRAL—HASH OF FROGS—DISPUTE WITH THE CHAPTER—BEGARELLI.

A.D. 1522—1530.

THE frescoes which Allegri had painted in the Convent of San Paolo must have been greatly talked of and admired in Parma. They had probably been begun, as we have seen, in the year 1518, and finished in 1519. The Benedictine monks of the Convent of San Giovanni were, no doubt, decided by the success of his works for the Abbess, to entrust him with the more important commission of painting the cupola of their own church. They appear however to have tested the power of the rising artist to depict religious subjects, before finally deciding on, what was to them, a matter of vital importance. Pungileoni mentions a fresco, painted by Allegri in the passages of the dormitory, representing *St. Benedict* in a flood of glory, surrounded by angels. No trace of it now remains.

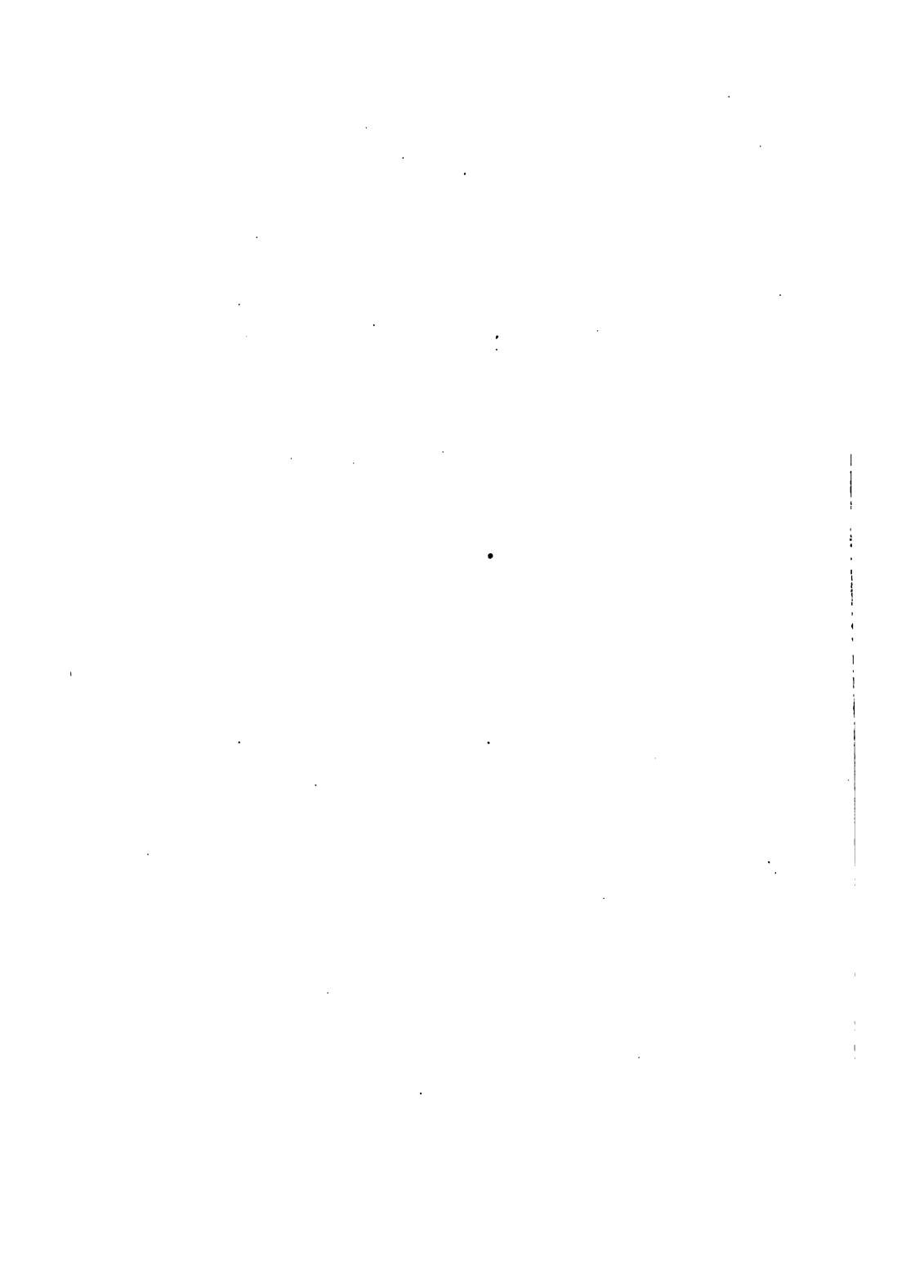
The contract by which Antonio undertook the commission





ST. THOMAS, BY CORREGGIO.

Fresco in San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma.



was signed on July 6th, 1520. Thirty ducats were at once advanced, according to the custom of the time, and on January 23rd, 1524, the last instalment was paid. In all, he received for the works—including the painting of the dome and the frieze-work round the building with gold and other decorations—the sum of 272 ducats. The work was most likely begun soon after the agreement was made, but it must have met with long and frequent interruptions, both from the war, and from his own visits to his family during 1521, and it was not until he brought his wife and little one to live in Parma, that the works would make much progress. This appears to have taken place early in 1522. Until that time Antonio had board and lodging given him in the monastery, which may have been intended as part payment. When he was joined by his wife he is said to have lived near the monastery in the Pescara quarters of the town.

Allegri treated the dome in what was then a novel manner, though it has since been so frequently used that it has become familiar to us. Until his time the frescoes in domes had generally been divided into panels or compartments, but Allegri filled the whole dome with one unbroken scene. By his peculiar method of foreshortening from the point of sight of the spectator, he seems to do away altogether with the dome, and to give us in its place the blue vault of heaven, filled with figures floating upwards into a sea of light, in the very positions in which they would actually appear to those beneath them. Unfortunately this fresco in San Giovanni is in a very bad state of preservation, as until the Carracci came to Parma in 1580 to study the works of Correggio, and by their intense admiration showed the Parmese in what estimation the work of the great painter was held by others, these magnificent frescoes were but little valued, and suffered

much by damp and neglect. When the painting was still fresh, however, in Correggio's most vivid, realistic manner the effect must have seemed almost supernatural.¹

The subject chosen was the *Ascension of our Lord*. It is here represented as a vision seen by St. John in his old age (the paintings being in the church of St. John the Evangelist). He is beneath, gazing upwards at the heavenly pageant. The central figure, that of our Lord, is being borne upwards by clouds into the dazzling light above. Below Him, in the wider part of the dome, come the Apostles, resting on clouds and watching the ascent. They are placed in groups of two, and below them again come the Evangelists, each with a father of the Church, distinguished from the Apostles by wearing long garments. St. Matthew is accompanied by St. Jerome, St. Mark by St. Gregory, St. Luke by St. Ambrose and St. John by St. Augustine. A frieze, which is divided by four windows, encircles the dome, and that part which is beneath each evangelist contains his emblems intermingled with *putti* and flowers. These *putti*, or boy angels play an important part in the frescoes. They are frolicking in wildest gambols over the whole space. Their heads fringe the clouds on which the Lord is ascending; they fill up the spaces between the apostles, play with their emblems and ride on the clouds. These *putti* could not fail to interfere with the solemnity of the scene. But solemnity Correggio seems scarcely to have

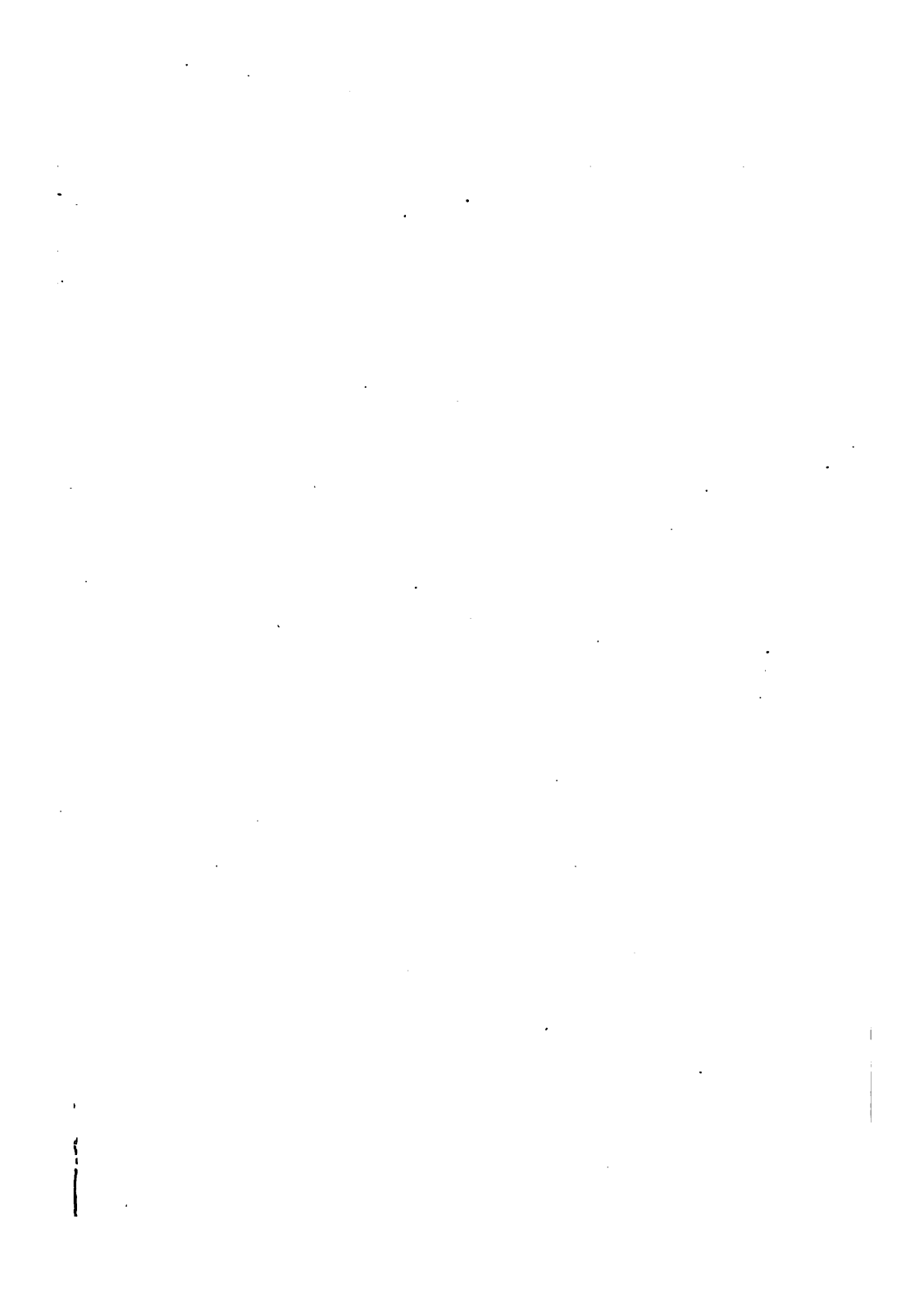
¹ It is sad to find that, owing to this neglect and to the constant burning of incense beneath the cupola, the frescoes have been so much blackened as to be almost invisible, unless perhaps on a very bright day. I was unfortunate in the weather during my short stay at Parma and had to come away at last without even a glimpse of the highest part of the frescoes in the cupola, and was obliged to content myself with studying the copies and engravings in the Academy.

aimed at. The attitude and countenance of the ascending Saviour Himself are too full of movement and vivacity to possess anything of the dignity and awe required by the subject; and in the effort to make the apostles unlike the conventional type in religious paintings, Correggio has gone to the opposite extreme, and has represented them as almost destitute of clothing and reposing on the clouds in the most free and unconstrained attitudes. The figures of the Evangelists and the Fathers between the windows are much nobler and more dignified. One cannot help regretting the total absence of the conventionality of earlier times, which necessitated greater solemnity in the composition and religious feeling in the expression. One of the chief beauties in this wonderful fresco is said to have been in the management of the light, which permeated or softened every shadow, and wrapped the figures in a wonderful glory of its own.

The paintings in the tribune of the church, which represented the *Coronation of the Virgin*, have unhappily been destroyed. The increasing congregation of the church demanded a larger building, and in the latter part of the sixteenth century, the frescoes were copied by Annibale and Agostino Carracci and repainted by Cesare Aretusi, Pisano and Paganino, in the ceiling of the new chancel, which replaced the old tribune. An attempt was made to remove the paintings themselves, but this was only successful with a small portion, which, however, took in the principal figures of the *Madonna and of her Divine Son*, who is placing a crown of stars on her head (*see frontispiece*). This fragment is now carefully preserved in the library in Parma. The face of the Virgin is one of the most lovely of the many beautiful faces painted by Correggio. Her eyes are cast down and her

hands pressed on her bosom as though overcome by emotion. The countenance of Christ is also very beautiful although somewhat wanting in power. The *putti* cannot certainly be said to be overcome by emotion; they are if anything even more audacious than those in the dome, as they carry on their games even among the robes of the principal figures.

Correggio also painted in fresco for the same church in a semicircular lunette over the door leading into the convent, a figure of *St. John*, sitting writing on a scroll which rests on a large book on his knee. His head is thrown back, and he is looking up to heaven for inspiration. A large eagle stands at his feet pluming its feathers. The colouring of this fresco has suffered from time and neglect, although the forms are clear and it is easily reproduced by photograph. Resta tells us that the monks also ordered an altar-piece for the church, but as he pretended to have the cartoon for this in his possession and this cartoon is, like the other works in his collection universally considered to be spurious, no belief can be attached to his statement. Two altar-pieces were however executed by Allegri for a chapel, which had been built by the Benedictine Don Placido del Bono, father confessor to Paul III. Neither of the subjects of these would probably have been chosen by Allegri himself, as they are little in accordance with his taste, but he executed them conscientiously—one, a *Pietà*, almost too conscientiously, for although he succeeds admirably in depicting the calm of the dead Christ, and also the physical prostration of Mary, yet in his effort to represent the unrestrained grief of the other women present, he shows their countenances actually distorted by weeping. To depict violent grief was uncongenial to him; and he accomplishes such a task either by choosing





ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST. BY CORREGGIO.

Fresco over the doorway of San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma.

the moment when the overtaxed strength gave way, or by the simple, unidealized representation of weeping.

The second altar-piece represents the *Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia*, of whom, legend says, the former was a disciple of St. Benedict and founded a monastery on the Benedictine model at Messina. He was quickly followed by his sister Flavia and two younger brothers, but they did not long enjoy the seclusion they sought. One day, soon after their arrival, a pirate crew landed, who put the Christians to death. Allegri has represented this tragic scene in the most graceful and least horrible manner possible. The two brothers are already dead, and Placidus and his sister have each received one wound, and are calmly awaiting the second stroke. The scene is enacting in the midst of the most lovely landscape, and the figures of the martyrs and of their executioners stand out with great effect from the light blue background. Both these pictures are now in the Academy at Parma.

The high esteem in which the great master was at this time held by the inhabitants of Parma is shown by several circumstances. In 1522, when his paintings in San Giovanni were probably sufficiently advanced to be shown to the public, the chapter of the cathedral entrusted to him the painting of the dome. This was a far more important commission than the last, and it was no doubt only after long deliberation, and from thorough conviction that Allegri was the best artist they could obtain, that they gave him the work. This fresco was not begun until 1526, when those in San Giovanni were finished, but Dr. Meyer thinks that it was probably the fact, that this new commission secured him remunerative work for some time to come, that decided the painter to bring his wife and little son to Parma.

It was however while still engaged in the paintings for the Benedictines, that he received and executed a commission by the town for a fresco of the *Madonna*, intended to be the guardian of the town, and to serve as a welcome to strangers arriving in it. This Madonna known by the name of the *Madonna della Scala*, appears to have been painted over the Eastern gate of the town, called the *Porta Romana*. It was evidently a high honour to entrust this fresco to a young man, still a comparative stranger in the town, and it shows how rapidly he was becoming known. The wall was afterwards taken down, but that part on which the fresco was painted, was built into the walls of a small church. To put the picture in its right position the church had to be somewhat raised, and the steps that led to it gave the picture the name of *della Scala*, or of the staircase. In 1812, when the church was taken down, the fresco was removed with the greatest care to the Academy. It has necessarily suffered much from its exposure to the weather, and also from its repeated removals and restorations, but it is still extremely beautiful, and may easily be recognized as the work of Allegri. It loses something in its present position from its having been placed too low down on the wall of the Academy, as the foreshortening shows that it was intended to be looked at from beneath.

Nothing is known of the origin of another fresco belonging to this time. It was painted in a niche in the Church of the *Annunziata*, and was afterwards removed, when that church was taken down, to a vestibule of the new Church of the *Annunziata*. It is in a very bad state of preservation, but the subject is still clearly visible, and some traces remain of the great beauty that Tiraboschi speaks of. It represents the *Annunciation*; it has now been removed from the church

and has been placed in the Academy. While the angel delivers his message, Mary kneels before him her face half turned away. The frolicsome boy-angels which Correggio so dearly loved to introduce are here playing with the wings of the archangel!

It was during the autumn of 1522, and while the works in San Giovanni were still in progress, that the negotiations were carried on between the Chapter of the Cathedral and Allegri, for the painting of the choir and dome of the Cathedral. He now asked much higher terms than he had done for the neighbouring church of San Giovanni. He demanded 1200 ducats, which were to include the gold leaf and other materials for decorations. To this the Chapter made some demur, and the sum was finally settled at 1000 ducats for the painting and 100 extra for the materials. Allegri was not able to begin so great an undertaking until his other work was finished, but there was more work to be done in the Cathedral, and the Chapter proceeded at once to engage the best artists they could find to undertake it. These were Francesco Mazzuoli, commonly called Parmigiano, Francesco Maria Rondani, and Michelangelo Anselmi. A month later they also secured the aid of Alessandro Araldi, whom we have seen as the chief decorative painter in Parma before the arrival of Allegri. The younger painters ranged themselves under Araldi, but they were increasingly influenced by the rising master now occupied on his great works at San Giovanni. Allegri cannot be said to have founded a school or to have left disciples behind him to perpetuate his style, but his manner had a profound effect on the young painters brought under his influence, especially on Parmigiano; and the whole art of the latter part of the sixteenth and of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was deeply influenced by him.

The records of the payments made to Allegri show us when the work began, what progress was made in it, and when it stopped. The first instalment of 189 ducats was paid early in the year 1526, when the work was commenced, and the remainder of the first quarter on September 29th of the same year. The next payment was made on November 17th, 1530, of 275 ducats, the second quarter of the whole amount. At a later time disagreement between the Chapter and the painter prevented the work being completed; and after Allegri's death a claim was made by the clergy on his heirs for the sum of 140 lire, to indemnify them for the painting having been left in an unfinished state. It is not known if this claim was paid.

This, the second dome that Allegri painted, he treated in a somewhat different way to the first. The figures in the cupola of San Giovanni were few, but of large size and distinct from each other; here, in the representation of the *Assumption of the Virgin*, with which the dome of the Cathedral is filled, there are hundreds of figures—many too small to be distinctly seen, and producing their effect mainly by the play of light and shade on the different groups. The central figure is that of the angel Gabriel, who is descending from a sea of light to meet the Virgin. She ascends to the glory above, borne on clouds supported by angels. Countless numbers of the angelic host surround her, and very beautiful many of these groups are and also very varied, for the master never repeats himself in this wonderful work. In the wider part of the dome there is a sort of balustrade running round, and on this stand the apostles, generally two together. Their gestures and attitudes show the liveliest interest in what is going on above them, but as usual Correggio has somewhat overdone the movement, and they

are consequently wanting in the dignity and calm that would befit the scene. Behind them are young angels busily engaged in their several duties—some pouring out perfumes, others holding candelabra or swinging incense. Below these in the divisions between the windows come the patron saints of Parma—SS. John the Baptist, Thomas, Hilary and Bernard—slowly ascending on clouds borne by angels. The effect produced on the spectator by the countless forms floating upward in the dome of the Parma Cathedral is well expressed by Sir Charles Eastlake in his "Materials for the History of Oil Painting." "In Correggio's system figures are generally placed at some angle with the plane of the picture, and are seldom quite parallel with it. The consequence is that his masses of light are often composed of many objects. This has been called a broken assemblage of shapes and, if reduced to outline, it would sometimes undoubtedly appear so, the objects being (to use an exaggerated expression for the sake of clearness) placed *endwise* towards the spectator, but, when connected by a magic harmony of light and shade, the result, far from being scattered is a 'plenitude of effect' seldom to be found in other painters and more satisfactory than when that mass is cheaply obtained by broad, flat surfaces."

The perfection, which Allegri has obtained in his effort to make the scene real to beholders, has naturally the fault that would apply equally to nature under such conditions. A number of figures ascending would not be seen to most advantage from beneath, and this the master with all his art could not remedy. It is not very surprising that the general feeling both of the public and of the Chapter of the Cathedral was at first of discontent. To appreciate the masterly way in which the difficulties of such a vast under-

taking were overcome, the infinite variety of posture, the skilful effects produced by the light and shadow on masses when the individual forms were scarcely seen, required more artistic training and perception than were possessed by the good people of Parma. The saying, which tradition records as having been uttered by a mason's boy, that the new paintings in the dome resembled a hash of frogs, no doubt obtained celebrity through its having given expression to the unuttered thought of many others. The greatest propriety of deportment and costume had so long been considered absolutely requisite in a religious picture, that the Parmese may well be pardoned for undervaluing the merits of the great fresco, when they saw all conventionality and even decorum set aside in it. Their first impression on gazing upwards was of the prominence given to the lower limbs of the hosts above, and to those who understood nothing of foreshortening, it would appear as if there was almost as little to be seen in many of the forms above them as in their favourite dish of frogs, at which only the hind legs were served ! It would demand real knowledge of art, as we have said, to appreciate the work, and tradition tells us that it required the opinion of a very strong artistic authority to enable them to put up with it. It is said that when Titian passed through Parma in the suite of Charles V. in 1530, the canons of the church had made up their minds to have it all effaced, and they only changed their intention in deference to the strongly pronounced opinion of the great Venetian master. He expressed his admiration in no measured terms : " If you had filled it with gold you would not have paid what it was worth." After such an opinion the canons were of course bound to admire and preserve their famous fresco, but it did not apparently put them on better terms with its painter.

This anecdote belongs only to tradition, but there is no doubt as to the fact, that, for half a century after Allegri's death, full justice was not done to his reputation in Parma, and also that some misunderstanding arose between him and the Chapter during the course of his works in the Cathedral. For in the year 1530, after receiving the second half of the money, when the paintings in the dome were almost finished and those in the choir not yet begun, Allegri voluntarily gave up the remainder of the work. It must therefore have become very distasteful to him for some cause or other, as he was not one easily to relinquish what he had once taken in hand. This work moreover, was one on which he had already expended a great deal of thought and labour. He was always, as we have already seen, most careful in minutely finishing his paintings, whatever might be the price he expected to receive for them, and here the labour was double, from the exceptional positions in which the figures were placed. Living models could not be expected to put themselves into the attitudes he required, and to obtain the foreshortening and effects of light and shadow, he made use of small figures made in clay. Scannelli, an Italian who lived in the seventeenth century, says, apparently without any foundation, that these were made for him by a friend. Vedriani, who wrote short biographies of the worthies of Modena, asserts that this friend was Antonio Begarelli, the sculptor of Modena. There is no proof of this assertion, however, or even of a friendship existing between the two, but the similarity in style between Allegri and Begarelli renders it very possible that they may have rendered services to each other; though, as Dr. Meyer points out in this case, Begarelli could only have worked under Allegri's guidance, as the figures in which he is said to have helped bear unmistakable

evidence of their having originated with the painter himself. The same writer asserts that Allegri understood the plastic art, and modelled in clay three of the figures in the *Descent from the Cross*, by Begarelli, now in the church of San Domenico in Modena. No mention is, however, made of Allegri in connexion with this work, by Lanzilotto, a contemporary chronicler.





CHAPTER IV.

LARGE ALTAR-PIECES — “MADONNA OF ST. SEBASTIAN ”—
“MADONNA DELLA SCODELLA ”—“IL GIORNO ”—“LA
NOTTE ”—“MADONNA OF ST. GEORGE ”—THE “READING
MAGDALEN.”

A.D. 1522—1530.

DURING his residence in Parma, Allegri found time for other works besides his great frescoes in San Giovanni and the Cathedral. He had now attained to his full powers, and each of the pictures belonging to this time is a masterpiece. They are unfortunately few in number, but what remain are indisputable. They consist for the most part of large altar-pieces, and wherever they are found they are most highly valued. Dresden possesses, besides the earlier work of the *Madonna of St. Francis*, no less than three of these religious pictures, the product of the mature genius of the great painter. Parma has succeeded in retaining two of them, although she was in great danger at one time of losing them, as they were both carried off to France during the French occupation of Italy.

To some of these altar-pieces, no date but an approximate one can be assigned, depending on the internal evidence

afforded by the degree of perfection attained ; but the date of others is determined by documents still in existence. Of the latter class, the first executed was probably the large altar-piece known as the *Madonna of St. Sebastian*, which is now in the Dresden Gallery. This was ordered in 1525, by an archery company in Modena called the Brotherhood of St. Sebastian. The commission is said to have been given soon after the disappearance of the plague, which had been raging in that town, and in order to fulfil a vow made by the Brotherhood to their patron saint. It was presented as an altar-piece to the chapel of St. Geminianus, in the Cathedral at Modena. It represents a glorified Madonna : the Virgin is seated on clouds with the Infant in her arms ; the light falls full on the two figures, forming a glory or halo round their heads, which is softened down to the surrounding figures. Above them floats a semicircle of cherubs' heads. The figure of St. Sebastian, bound and wounded yet gazing up with loving reverence at the heavenly figures above him, is one of the most beautiful that Allegri has ever produced. On the other side is St. Roch in a pilgrim's dress asleep, or, as M. Viardot thinks, dying of the plague caught from the sufferers he had tended at Placentia ; and in the centre is St. Geminianus in the robes of a bishop, one hand pointing upwards to the Infant Saviour, the other downwards to the people below, as if in the act of calling their attention to the Saviour, or of interceding for them. In the corner below St. Sebastian, is a graceful young girl holding the model of a church. As usual *putti* are introduced playing in the clouds below the Madonna. One of these who is sitting astride on a billowy mass has caused the name of "The Riding School" to be sometimes given to the picture.

Correggio has allowed himself greater licence with his

favourite *putti* in this work than in any other of his altarpieces, and although nothing can be more charming than the children themselves, yet it must be confessed they seem somewhat out of place here. Sir Charles Eastlake says of



MADONNA DELLA SCODELLA. BY CORREGGIO.

In the Parma Gallery.

this painting: “The most extraordinary instance of the trivial and childish treatment of a sacred subject as regards invention and composition is perhaps the *St. Sebastian* at

Dresden, in which the actions of some of the infant angels and of the other figures border, and intentionally so, on the ridiculous."

The next of these pictures in chronological order is probably the *Madonna della Scodella* at Parma, so named from a bowl which the Virgin is holding in her hand; it is painted on wood. It was intended for the church of the San Sepolcro in Parma, and was paid for by subscription. There may have been some difficulty in making up the amount, as the artist consented to receive part payment in "different kinds of things." This picture was ordered in 1526, and was finished—according to a document found in the archives of the church—in 1528; so that the date on the frame, which is given as 1530, must be intended for the year in which it was placed over the altar. This painting has sometimes been called the *San Giuseppe*, from St. Joseph being the most prominent person in it. It represents the rest during the flight into Egypt, spoken of in the apocryphal gospel of *De Infantia Salvatoris*, in which a palm-tree is stated to have bowed itself down to Joseph's hand, when refreshment was needed for the Holy Child. Mary is here seated under the shade of the palm-tree, with the Child resting against her. He is older than He is usually represented at this time, being apparently about three years of age, and is eagerly receiving the dates which Joseph is picking for him. The means by which the tree bends is no mystery, as a number of little angels are pulling it down with all their might—both they and the artist equally pleased at their having some legitimate occupation in the picture.¹

¹ It is interesting to compare with this work by Correggio, two woodcuts of the same subject, the *Repose in Egypt*, by Lucas Cranach, in which little boy-angels gambol about the sacred group in a most un-

Although this painting has suffered somewhat from the ravages of time, the colours are still wonderfully brilliant, and it well deserves the place of honour it holds in the Academy of Parma.

The second large altar-piece, that now serves as a companion piece to this in the Academy—the *Madonna of St. Jerome*, or *Il Giorno*—has been secured by Parma, although, like the last-mentioned *Madonna della Scodella*, it paid a visit to Paris at the time of the French occupation of Italy, in company with many other master-pieces. After the Treaty of Paris, the French government was very anxious to retain it, and is said to have offered a million francs for it, but the Parmese were at that time fully alive to the merits of the great painter, and refused to give it up on any terms. Toschi, the celebrated engraver, exerted himself much to obtain its restitution, and was rewarded for his efforts by seeing it restored to its place in 1816.²

The commission for this work was given in 1523, by Donna Briseide Colla, but several years elapsed before it was finished. Allegri took a long time over most of the private commissions received during this time, no doubt in consequence of his time being so much occupied with his larger works, and it was not until the year 1528, that this painting was placed in the church of Sant' Antonio Abbate at Parma. There is no certain evidence to show that it was finished much before that time. A record, said to have existed

constrained manner, climbing trees, lopping off branches, plucking fruit, and shooting birds: in one, they join hands and form a ring and dance round the Holy Family.

² The old *Custode* of the Academy informs the visitors with much pride that this painting was placed first in the catalogue of that great Exhibition at Paris during the first Empire, when all the masterpieces of Europe were collected in the Louvre.

formerly among the Convent archives, though it is not now to be found, stated that the sum agreed on for this picture was 400 lire imperiali. The lady, however, was so much pleased with the work when finished, that she added to the payment a substantial present, consisting of two cartloads of faggots, a few bushels of wheat, and a pig. Such a present was much more in accordance with the customs of that time than with those of ours, and it probably, gave rise to no surprise when the painter made such a choice for the offered present.

The sum received by the author of this noble work, even with the addition made by the conscience or generosity of the Donna, seems to us ludicrously disproportionate to its merits. For this is universally recognized as one of his finest masterpieces, and the execution is as near perfect as possible. The name *Il Giorno (Day)* has been applied partly to contrast it with another work that was probably in progress at the same time, and also because of its being essentially a picture of daylight. The Virgin is here represented seated under a sort of bower formed by red drapery stretched across from one side to the other and hanging in loose folds behind St. Jerome. The back is open showing a lovely landscape, with trees, hills, and the portico of a temple. The young mother is seated in the centre of the picture with her foot resting on a rock; her eyes are cast down, and she is smiling at the Child's eagerness. There is nothing divine in the countenance of the Infant; he is simply one of the merry, lovable children that Correggio much loved to depict. One hand he is reaching out to an open book held before him by St. Jerome, and to which a young boy-angel is pointing, while the other hand nestles lovingly among the luxuriant hair of the Magdalen. This Magdalen

is one of the most perfect of the master's creations. Regarded simply as a beautiful, graceful woman it is indeed perfect, and has called forth the warmest encomiums. Ruskin says that the colour Correggio has used for the hair is the only one with which certain light, golden clouds could be painted; but on the other hand, in another place he criticizes severely the whole figure, when he speaks of her as the lascivious Magdalen of the *Il Giorno*. This is strong language to apply to such a figure in which, though there is perhaps nothing to indicate the Christian saint, there appears, to us at least, no trace of past or present impurity in the exquisite beauty of the saint. On the other side stands St. Jerome, who, from being the most prominent of the saints in it, has given his name to the picture. This figure has aroused as enthusiastic admiration as the Magdalen, but Dr. Meyer considers it to be the weakest in the entire picture, from the peculiar attitude in which the saint is depicted.

As we have already seen, the work which naturally challenges comparison with the *St. Jerome*, was in the studio of the artist at the same time with it. It is, perhaps, the best known of all Correggio's works to English readers, from the numerous engravings and photographs by which it has been reproduced. We speak of the celebrated *Notte* (or *Night*) in the Dresden Gallery. This picture was ordered in 1522, when the works in San Giovanni were still in progress, but it was not finished until 1530. The written agreement dated October 10th, 1522, is still in existence, in which Alberto Pratonero of Reggio engages to pay the sum of 208 lire, according to the old Reggio standard, to Antonio da Correggio for a work representing the Birth of Christ and a few other figures—adding the unnecessary proviso considering who the artist was "that the whole was to be done excellently well."

The exact value of this sum has not been ascertained, but it was evidently a low one even for Allegri at this time, though he was probably not rich enough to be able to despise small commissions. He was no doubt allowed to take his own time over it, in consideration of the small payment, and it was not finished until 1530. By this delay Pratonero was the gainer, as he received the picture at last, finished in the best style of the master's best time.

All who have been fortunate enough to see the original of this picture seem unable to speak highly enough of its wonderful beauty. Many give it the first place in all Correggio's works, and its extreme beauty certainly seems to explain, if not to justify the intense longing of the lords of Modena to possess it. It was placed in 1530, in the church of San Prospero, and during the second half of the sixteenth century the Dukes of Modena tried to obtain possession of it, but in vain. In the end their love of art proved stronger than their honesty, and the picture was carried off one night by order of Duke Francesco I. A copy was afterwards presented to the church, but this would prove but poor amends for such a loss. The splendid collection of the Dukes of Modena was bought by Augustus III, King of Saxony, in the year 1746, for the comparatively small sum of 120,000 thalers (18,000*l.*). He carried off his newly-acquired treasures without opposition, as the other States in Europe cared too little about art, and were too busy with their own affairs to dispute the prize with him. Augustus when emptying his exchequer in the purchase of pictures showed but little regard for the welfare of his kingdom, as he was at the very time engaged in a dispute with Frederick the Great! However the dangers of that time have long passed away, while the pictures remain and form one of the finest Galleries in Europe, so perhaps Augustus III. may be forgiven by posterity.







THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS ("LA NOTTE").

By Correggio. In the Dresden Gallery.

It is scarcely necessary to give any description of this painting. The Child lies in the Manger encircled by his Mother's arms, diffusing around Him that soft phosphorescent light, which forms so distinguishing a feature in the composition, while Mary bends over Him, the light thus falling more equally on her face. The Child and the Mother in her blue drapery are therefore the first objects on which the eye falls—but a little farther off and at one side of the picture stand the group of shepherds who have come in to see the confirmation of the "glad tidings" preached by the angel. Their roughness and toil-worn countenances, full of interest and surprise at the miracle, form a striking contrast to the calm delicacy and repose of the Mother and Child. Above them is a group of angels, invisible now to the shepherds, but as eager as they themselves in their joy and as unconstrained in their attitudes. They seem in the very act of flying down to witness the mystery of the Incarnation. The light reveals to us in the background Joseph leading away the ass. In the horizon the first streaks of dawn are just appearing.

Another of the large altar-pieces in the Dresden Gallery is that known by the name of the *Madonna of St. George*. This was ordered for the Brotherhood of San Pietro Martire in Modena, but in what year the commission was given, or when it was executed, is not known. It remained in the church, for which it was painted, until 1649. It has been stated on the authority of some early records that the Oratory of the Brotherhood was painted in 1531-32, and in that case the grand altar-piece *may* have been placed in its position at that time. The picture was evidently intended to be raised considerably above the spectator, as the strong foreshortening of the Madonna's position in the panel

looks strange when the eye is on a level with it in the gallery. The Madonna is seated on a high throne, with the Child on her knees, and below her stand four saints interceding for the people—St. John the Baptist, a youthful, delicately-painted figure, St. Peter Martyr, the patron saint of the Brotherhood, St. Geminianus, near whom an angel holds a model of a church he had built in Padua, and St. George, with the dragon at his feet. The arms of the warrior-saint are borne by four little *putti*, one of whom is trying on the helmet. This picture has been said to represent the family of the painter, but this is quite disproved by the children here being all boys.

The last of the treasures of Correggio's work in Dresden is a small picture not more than a foot square in size, but as well known to us as the *Notte* or *Giorno*: it is the celebrated *Reading Magdalen*. The history of this picture is not known. It is probably the same work as one stated to have been in the possession of Count Niccolò de Gaddi at Florence in 1600. It must, in this case, have been acquired by the Dukes of Modena soon afterwards, as it had apparently been long in their possession before it passed into Saxony. This exquisite little picture is painted on copper, on which, it is said, Allegri laid a wash of gold to enhance the brilliancy of the colouring. The Magdalen, wrapped in blue drapery which contrasts admirably with the delicate flesh-tints of her arms, neck, and feet, is lying on the grass, her right arm supporting her head to enable her to read in a book spread before her on the grass, while the golden hair which Allegri excelled in painting falls around her in rich tresses. The date of this picture is not known, but, by its exquisite finish, it evidently belongs to the later years of the master's life.



CHAPTER V.

DEATH OF HIS WIFE—RETURN TO CORREGGIO—PURCHASE OF
A HOUSE THERE—REVISIT TO PARMA—RETIREMENT—POR-
TRAITS—MYTHOLOGIC WORKS—"JUPITER AND ANTIOPÉ"
"EDUCATION OF CUPID"—THE LOST "MAGDALEN"—
"LEDA"—"DANAË"—ALLEGORIC WORKS—DEATH—HIS
SON POMONIO—PARMIGIANO—OTHER FOLLOWERS.

A. D. 1530—1534.

WE have now to turn once more to the artist's private life. We have seen that he probably brought his wife and young son to Parma as soon as her affairs allowed of her leaving Correggio, and his own engagements in Parma seemed to involve a residence of some time in that city. It was here that his four younger children were born, and here also, in all probability, that his wife died. The date of her death can only be surmised, Her signature is attached to documents in 1528, when she and her husband were living in Parma, and as there is no mention of her death in the registers of Correggio, she must in all probability have died at Parma some time between 1528 and 1530—when her husband returned to his native town with his little children. The grief and depression he felt at her death had probably

much to do with this sudden retirement from the scene of his greatest triumphs, although other causes no doubt helped to determine him. The Chapter of the Cathedral seem to have been but half-satisfied with the execution of the great works they had ordered. They were however not prepared to break their agreement with the painter, and entrust the completion of the Cathedral to other artists, as, after his death, they claimed from his heirs the return of a small sum paid for work still uncompleted and so showed that they had gone on expecting his return. They had probably continually annoyed the master with depreciation of his work, and possibly with a liberal exposition of their own views as to how such subjects ought to be treated. The payment of the second instalment of the money on November 17th, 1530, seems to have brought matters to a crisis, for it was immediately after this that Allegri returned to his native town, there to pass the remainder of his life. He appears either to have been thoroughly tired of his dealings with his ecclesiastical patrons, or else to have been at length convinced that the true sphere of his talent did not lie in sacred scenes, for, after his return to Correggio, we find him devoting himself exclusively to mythologic and allegoric subjects—unless indeed the *Reading Magdalen* belongs to this time.

His first act on his return to Correggio was to invest the money he had just received for his works in the Cathedral at Parma, in the purchase of a piece of land. This was bought by himself from the widow of a certain Giovanni Cattania of Correggio for the sum of 195 scudi 10 soldi. His father had already let a house for him in the Borgo Nuovo, in May of this year, so that the stories of his sufferings from extreme poverty in the latter part of his life, are evidently wholly without foundation.

Antonio Allegri was now thirty-six years of age, and had just given proof of what his genius was capable, so that this voluntary retirement into comparative obscurity is a most rare instance of modesty and absence of ambition in the annals of art. He seems now to have secured a competence—however mean this competence might have appeared to the other great masters of that age—and the use he makes of his freedom is for the future to accept only such commissions as pleased him; to devote equal—he could not give greater—care to their execution, and to pass the remaining years of his life among the scenes he loved best, where, surrounded by his relations and friends of early life, he could be free from the agitations and annoyances that had beset his life in Parma. Who can say that such a life was one less to be envied than the more brilliant positions occupied by Raphael and Titian?

It was some little time however before he could be quite free of the connexion with Parma. In February 1531, he was again in that city making some arrangement with the architectural inspector of the Cathedral; but what this arrangement was, is not known. Later on in the same year, his name appears as witness to several legal documents in Correggio, so that his stay in Parma could not have been a prolonged one. He probably lived in the house left him by his uncle in the Borgo Vecchio, which was afterwards sold by his son Pomponio. His life must have been retired both here and in Parma, as is proved by the difficulty afterwards experienced by his biographers in collecting any personal recollections of the great painter. Vasari, who visited Parma only eight years after Allegri's death, could collect even then but very uncertain and unsatisfactory particulars, and, as we have seen, gives us, in place of reliable information, his own deductions from the obscurity of the master's life.

He tells us clearly however that no portrait has been left of him either painted by himself or by any other master. Vasari himself seems to have been the first who even made inquiries about such a portrait, and it was not until after the visit of the Carracci, in 1580, that public interest was sufficiently excited in him to rouse a desire to find a likeness. Then, of course, many were forthcoming but none can be proved to be genuine. One is supposed to represent a miniature painter—Antonio Bernieri da Correggio; another to be the portrait of a priest bearing the same name Antonio da Correggio; a third represents an old man with a wrinkled brow, and so is manifestly not the Allegri who died in his fortieth year; a fourth—that most generally known in England is one that we would gladly accept as genuine if there could only be found some reasonable probability—is the one taken from a fresco by Lattanzio Gambara on the west wall of the Cathedral at Parma. It represents a handsome man in the prime of life with a thoughtful expression and holding a palette in his hand. But, alas! Lattanzio was only born in 1533, and there is no record of any earlier work from which it might have been copied.

The two mythologic works which from the execution were apparently the first of Correggio's mythologic paintings in order of time, are the *Jupiter and Antiope* of the Louvre, and the *Education of Cupid* (or *School of Love*) in our own National Gallery. The origin of both is unknown and also the exact date of their execution, but they appear to belong to the middle period of his art, and may therefore have been painted at any time between 1522 and 1530. The earliest record we have of them is in the collection of the Dukes of Mantua. They are mentioned in the catalogue of that Gallery drawn up in 1627. In it, the Louvre picture is

called *Venus, Cupid and a Satyr*, and this seems more appropriate than the title now given to it, although there is nothing more distinctive to connect the nymph with Venus than with Antiope, and the bow at her side would seem to point rather to her being merely intended to represent a nymph tired with the chase. Both these pictures were sold by Duke Vincenzo II. of Gonzaga, and were purchased by Charles I. of England. At the sale of the art treasures of that king, the *Jupiter and Antiope* was bought by the banker Jabach, and at his death passed to Cardinal Mazarin, and finally to Louis XIV. The *Education of Cupid* passed through still more hands. On leaving England, it was owned in turn by the Duke of Alva, and by Godoy, the Prince of Peace, from whose collection in Madrid Murat carried it off just as it was about to be sold by auction. Murat's widow, the ex-queen of Naples, took it to Vienna, where it was bought by the Marquis of Londonderry, who afterwards sold it to the National Gallery.

In the *Jupiter and Antiope* we see a nymph asleep in a wood, with a Cupid at her side, also sleeping soundly. The exquisite painting and minute finish of this work are equal to anything ever attempted by this master, and the beautiful woodland scene in which the group is placed shows what Correggio could do in landscape. Mr. Ruskin draws especial attention to the foliage of the oak under which the nymph is sleeping. The small picture of the *Education of Cupid* also shows a group of three figures: Mercury, who is seated, is engaged in helping Cupid to read a paper which he holds in his hand. Venus, leaning against a tree points laughingly to Cupid. It is a proof that Correggio cared no more for the trammels of tradition in mythologic than in sacred art, that he has

defied all precedent by giving Venus wings. This picture is indeed what Waagen in his "Treasures of Art in Great Britain" has called it—sculpture on a flat surface. To give this effect the painter used the utmost art and refinement in his flesh tints and in the reflected light and shadows. The countenance however of the goddess of beauty is by no means equal to the rest of the picture, and is certainly disappointing when we remember the Antiope and the many lovely faces the master had depicted. The picture too has suffered from time and its many journeys, and has been touched up under the name of *restoration* with darker colours, which have certainly far from restored it to its pristine beauty.

Allegri's life both in Parma and after his return to his native town was, as we have already seen, very retired. Little is related of his friendships in either place but there is evidence to show that he was at all events known and respected by the reigning family of Correggio. A letter is extant from Veronica Gamba to Beatrice d'Este of Mantua dated September 3rd, 1528. In this she says: "I should consider myself very remiss towards your Highness if I omitted to allude to a master-work in painting, which our Antonio Allegri has just completed, as I know your Highness, who is such a connoisseur in matters, would be pleased with it. The picture represents the Magdalen, who has fled into a dark cavern in a desert to do penance. She kneels to the right, and with her clasped hands raised up to heaven implores pardon for her sins. The beauty of her position, the expression of sublime though intense grief, and her very charming face render her so lovely, that everybody who sees it marvels." Nothing is known of this picture; it is not found among the catalogue made of Veronica's works of art at her death—as indeed none of Correggio's works are, and the picture was not

necessarily painted for her. But the allusion to *our* Antonio Allegri is very valuable as showing the pride she felt in the one great artist of her little town. It also shows that she was accustomed to speak of his paintings to her friends and justifies Dr. Meyer in attributing to her agency rather than to that of Giulio Romano the commission which our master received about the year 1530 to paint two pictures for the Emperor Charles V.

Veronica Gambara certainly had opportunities for recommending him, as during the year 1529, and part of 1530 she resided in Bologna, where her artistic and literary tastes gathered round her a circle of distinguished men. She may very possibly have gone there to be present at the coronation of Charles V. as King of Italy. Her position would make this natural, as one of her brothers had been appointed vice-regent by Clement VII., and another was chamberlain and general-in-waiting to the Emperor. At Bologna, she certainly met the Emperor, who promised to stay with her at Correggio on his way back to Germany. This he seems to have done towards the end of March 1530, when he passed two days at Correggio. Antonio Allegri we have seen was in Parma at that time, but Veronica very probably spoke of him now to the Emperor and afterwards let the Duke of Mantua, Federigo II., know that a present of some works by Allegri would be acceptable to the Emperor.

Vasari tells us that the paintings destined for the Emperor were "a naked Leda" and a "Venus." His descriptions however are confused, and no known works of Allegri's would exactly correspond with either; so we conclude that it is the *Leda* and *Danaë* that are meant. That representing *Leda* is now in the Gallery at Berlin. It is a more elaborate composition than Allegri often undertook, and more figures

are introduced. Leda and her companions while bathing are surprised by some swans, and their attitudes, as half in play they attempt to drive them off, are very natural and graceful.

If pictures could relate their own history, this *Leda* would have a curious story to tell. It must have passed at an early date into Germany and was bought for the collection of the Emperor Rudolph II. at Prague. It next appears in Sweden, where it was doubtless carried at the time of the Swedish occupation of Prague. Queen Christina is said to have presented it to Livio Odescalchi. In 1722, it passed into the famous collection of the dukes of the Orleans family, and it was one of these dukes—Louis the son of the Regent, and a Jansenist—who was so much scandalized at the face both of Leda and also of that in a copy of Correggio's *Io* that he cut the two heads out of the pictures, and threw them into the fire, ending his work by cutting the canvas into strips. The fragments were rescued from utter destruction by Noël Coypel, superintendent of the Gallery. He placed them on fresh canvas, and painted in new heads. The pictures were afterwards bought for Frederick the Great. From Sans-Souci, they were again brought to Paris at the time of what a French writer calls "nos illustres pillages." Here they were again *restored* and at their final return to Berlin after the peace, Leda's head was once more painted in by Schlesinger, who, to make it in accordance with the old painting, imitated even to the cracks left by time.

The second picture presented to Charles V. by the Duke of Mantua, is supposed to have been *Danaë lying on a Couch with Love and two Putti*. When in possession of Louis of Orleans it escaped his notice, and is now in the Borghese Gallery at Rome. It has been carefully cleaned and is in a

good state of preservation. This painting represents Danaë lying partly in shade, and covered with white drapery on which the golden shower is falling. Love or Hymen is sitting on the foot of the bed, pointing to the shower of gold, and the two little Loves in the corner are busy sharpening their arrows. These Cupids are exquisite, but as in the *Education of Cupid* the face of the principal figure is, we think, deficient in beauty.

Two representations of *Ganymede* have been attributed to Correggio. One of these—an oil painting in the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna—has been now restored to Parmigiano, to whom it was at first attributed; the second, a medallion in fresco, representing *Ganymede borne on an Eagle to the feet of Jupiter*, removed from the walls of the Palazzo Rocca at Novellara, to the Gallery at Modena, has greater probability to support its claims to be a genuine Correggio; though it is so much dilapidated that it is difficult to trace his hand in it. The Palace however belonged to the Count Gonzaga di Novellara, whose family was a collateral branch of the Gonzagas of Mantua, so that the Count would almost certainly have heard of Allegri's fame, and may well have wished to secure some specimen of his work. Dr. Meyer pronounces it thoroughly Correggesque in style.

Another allegoric work belonging to this time is a painting in the Vienna Gallery, called *Io embraced by Jupiter in a Cloud*. Io is here the chief figure. She is sitting with her back to the spectator turning bashfully aside from Jupiter, whose head only is seen emerging from the cloud, as he bends forward to kiss her while his arm encircles her waist. It is not clearly ascertained whether this picture was also painted for Charles V., though it seems highly probable. It was bought of the sculptor Pompeo Leoni, who appears to have

obtained it from Philip II., for the Emperor Rudolph II. It escaped the fate of the *Leda* by being sent to Vienna instead of to Prague. Two old copies are known of this work—the one at Berlin, mutilated as we have seen by the Duke of Orleans, and another called *A Dream*, in the possession of Count Gonzaga di Novellara.

Critics invariably call attention to the simplicity of Allegri's composition. He seldom attempts an elaborate subject or, at least in an easel picture, one requiring many figures. His evident aim in every subject, whether sacred or mythologic, is to represent it with the utmost grace and physical beauty possible, and he cares but little for the correctness of the accessories. It is but seldom indeed that he troubles himself with any deeper significance in his compositions than the most perfect rendering of sensuous beauty, and it is therefore with some surprise, although such works were much in fashion among painters of that time, that we find that his latest works were allegories. Two of these are now in the *Cabinet de desseins* of the Louvre. These are painted in tempera on linen, and are the only ones extant in that style by Allegri. They are companion sketches, and represent—one the *Triumph of Virtue*, the other *Vice with the Passions*. In the first of these Virtue, a noble woman fully armed, is leaning upon a broken lance, while she is being crowned by Victory. Another female figure seated somewhat below Virtue, and holding in her hand a sword and bridle, represents Justice and Moderation. Wisdom is typified by a young woman more in the background, who, with one hand is measuring a globe, and with the other pointing to the distant landscape. Three figures float in the air above the group, the goddesses of Fame and Renown, and one of Correggio's favourite Putti leans against Wisdom.

Vice under the Yoke of the Passions is shown by a naked man bound to a tree, to which he is being still more firmly fastened by a woman who is supposed to represent Habit. Behind him stands Voluptuousness, a coarse sensual-looking figure, who, by playing a flute close to his ear, prevents him from paying heed to the reproaches of Conscience, or from noticing the vipers in her hands, which are stretching out their necks to him. A different stage of vice is seen in the laughing boy satyr in front holding a bunch of grapes.

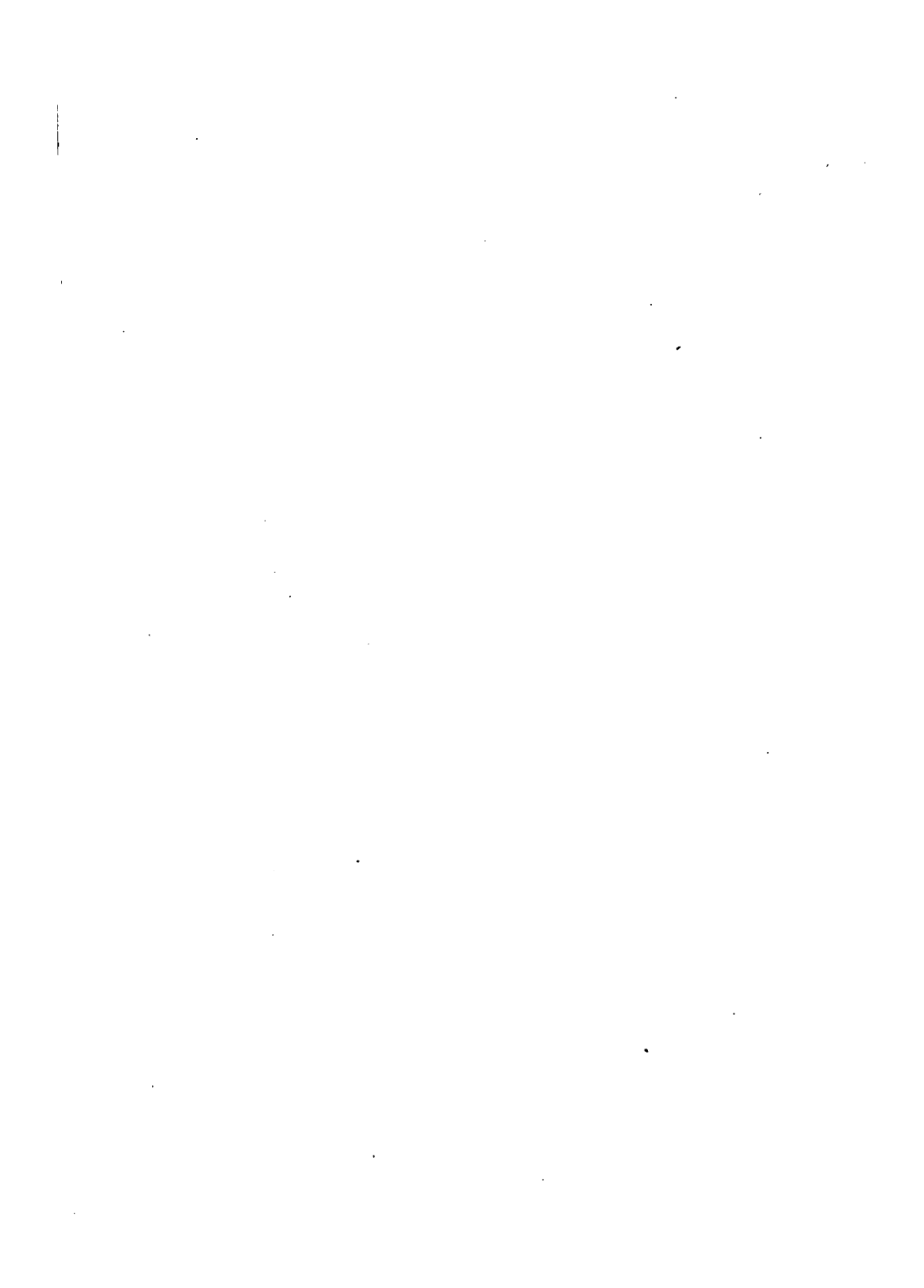
These sketches were no doubt painted for Isabella Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, after Allegri had finished the orders from her son Federigo for the pictures intended for Charles V. This lady is known to have taken great interest in art and to have left a valuable collection of paintings. She died in 1539, only a few years after Allegri, and in the catalogue then made of the works of art in her possession, these pictures are mentioned. They passed, probably in company with the *Antiope*, into the collection of Charles I., and from thence to France. A repetition of the *Triumph of Virtue* with some alterations is in the Doria Gallery at Rome: this is likewise painted in distemper, and has a peculiar value from its being unfinished, and so revealing the artist's method of laying on his colours. He is here seen to have produced the wished for effect in a very early stage, though, as we know, this did not prevent him from finishing most minutely afterwards. He has laid over the canvas a preparatory coating of warm brown. The figures are in different stages of progress—some are only sketched in red: another has a coating of black and white; a third—the figure of Virtue—is painted in white and a brownish black. Only one head is quite complete.

This unfinished replica is the last work of the great master. According to a legal document dated June 15th, 1534, Allegri

accepted a commission from Alberto Panciroli to paint a large altar-piece for the church of Sant' Agostino in Correggio, but the same document records that the sum of twenty-five scudi paid in advance, had been restored by Pellegrino Allegri, on his son's death without completing the agreement.

The following is the account given by Vasari of the painter's death :—" It is related that being at Parma, and having there received a payment of sixty scudi, the sum was given to him in copper money, which he, desiring to carry to Correggio for some particular demand, loaded himself withal ; he then set forward on foot for his home. The heat being very great at the time, Antonio suffered much from the burning sun, and sought to refresh himself by drinking water, but a raging fever compelled him to take to his bed, and from this he never raised his head again, but departed from this life to another, being then in the fortieth year of his age, or thereabout." We have already seen that this account, which apparently rests on the vaguest traditions, is quite inconsistent with what is known of the position and character of Allegri. It is besides rendered impossible by the fact that the weight of such a sum in copper would be equal to between three and four hundredweight !

We are able then confidently to reject this fable, but we have no trustworthy evidence to give in its place. The parish records of the Franciscan church of Correggio record the great master's death on March 5th, 1534, and this is all that we know about it. The fact that he had lately undertaken a new commission, and that there had been no falling off in his powers, tend to show that his illness could not have been a long one. He died at the age of forty, leaving, so far as we know, one unfinished picture in his studio and having one unexecuted order on hand.

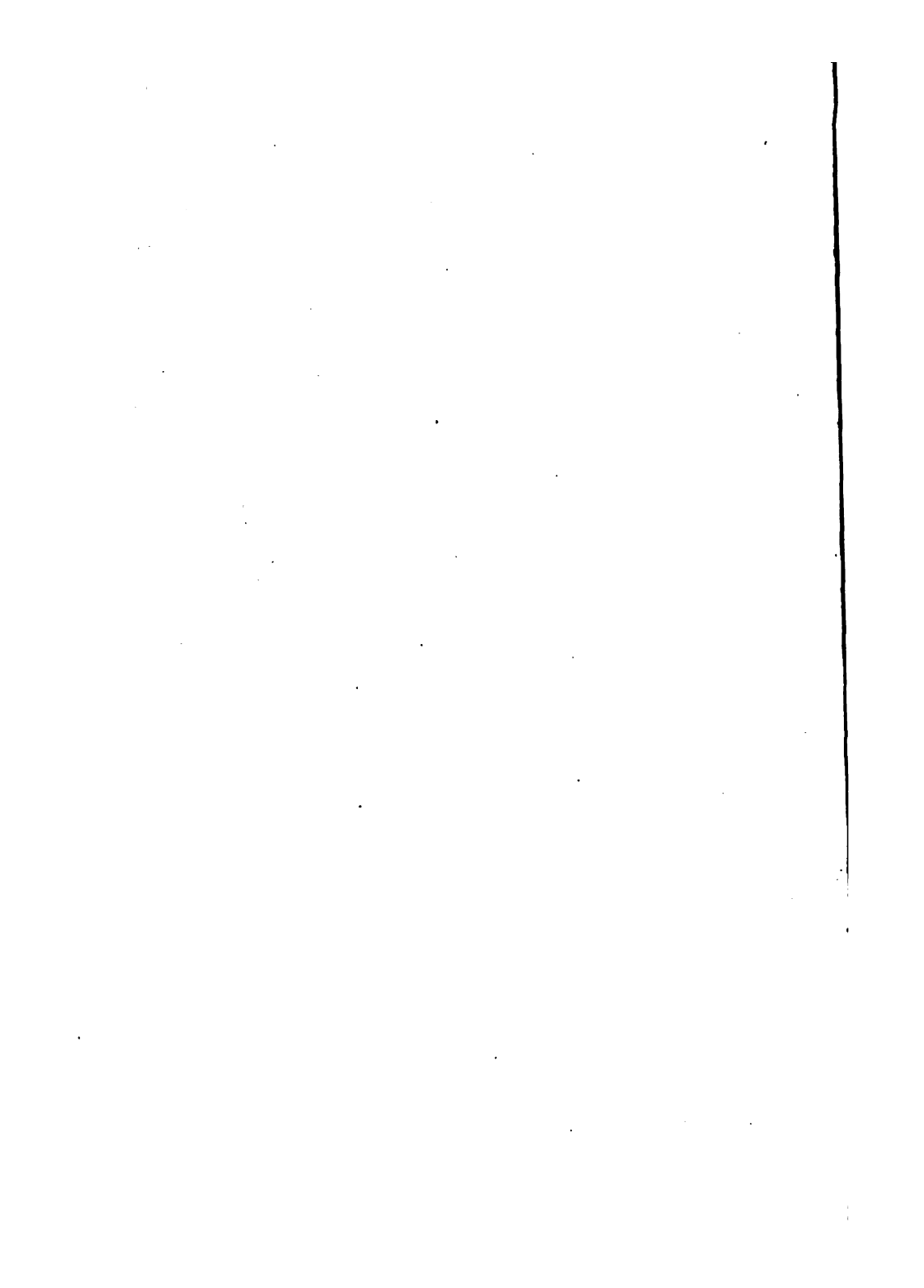






THE MADONNA AND CHILD, WITH ST. JEROME AND THE MAGDALEN ("IL GIORNO").

By Correggio. In the Parma Gallery.



The great painter was buried with the utmost simplicity in what was probably the family burying-place—an exterior cross-passage of the church of San Francesco. A wooden tablet was erected to his memory bearing the words: ANTONINO DE ALLEGRIS, PICTOR. In the seventeenth century, as a consequence of the ardour aroused by the enthusiasm of the Carracci, a subscription list was opened to raise a monument worthy of such a great master. It failed however to effect the purpose, as only forty scudi were collected. Some years later a priest, Girolamo Conti, replaced the wooden tablet by a stone one, and in 1687 the commonalty of the town again bestirred themselves, and this time went so far as to draw up a contract with a sculptor, who was to execute the monument. By some means however, incomprehensible to us, the scheme again fell through. Father Resta, in the interests of his collection of drawings, tried once more to bring the subject on the *tapis*, but without success. Before another attempt was made, the chapel had been altered, and the remains of the illustrious painter removed to another place not very clearly specified. So that at last, when in 1786, the precious relics were sought for, great doubt was felt as to their genuineness. The town authorities however did their best to settle the matter by declaring that the remains which had been found were proved to belong to the great artist by "incontrovertible testimony." They took them up with the greatest care, sent the skull to the Academy of Modena and placed the rest of the bones in an urn in the Senate House of Correggio.

The question whether Allegri would have attained a greater degree of perfection in his art had he lived longer, has been much discussed, but it seems to us an unprofitable one. No

trace of decline can be seen in any of his later pictures, but at the same time it is difficult to imagine any improvement in the physical beauty, he so well depicted, and there is no sign visible anywhere of an attempt after more spirituality. The general opinion, therefore, seems reasonable that he had attained the highest perfection he was capable of reaching, and that any change would have been for the worse.

Had he lived longer, there is little doubt that his name, which had lately begun to spread among the art-patrons in Italy, would have become widely known, and in a few years' time the celebrity he so little courted would have come to him unasked. Dying at the age of forty, however, it at first seemed as if his fame were destined to die with him. He had founded no school, and during his life there were few painters who could be said to have modelled their style on his. He had indeed brought up his son Pomponio as a painter, but as he died when this son was only twelve years old, he could have taught him but little. Each year, however, that passed after Correggio's death seems to have increased his influence over painting. This influence however coming as it did when painting had already reached its highest development was of little real use. The admirers of Correggio, like those of Michelangelo, by the imitation and exaggeration of his style, only succeeded in bringing on more rapidly the decay of art.

Little is known of the subsequent fate of the great painter's family. Several pictures by Pomponio Allegri are preserved in the Academy at Parma, and in a chapel at the side of the grand dome in the Cathedral painted by his father, there is a fresco by Pomponio which shows, by melancholy contrast how far the son was below the father—especially in composition. Some of the separate heads and figures possess

considerable beauty, and suggest the idea that Pomponio must have made free use of the designs and sketches left by his parent. Pomponio was not much greater as a man of business than as a painter for he seems soon to have been in pecuniary difficulties, although he began life in comfortable circumstances with the money left him by his father and grandfather. His father's reputation too had secured him the favour of the princes of Correggio as well as many commissions from other patrons of art.

The date of Pomponio's death is not known, and it is only supposition, which indicates a certain Antonio Allegri, a door and window painter, as a son of Pomponio and grandson of the great Correggio. Of his daughters' fate no trace has been found. Little interest was at first felt in the subject and when at last the inhabitants of Parma and Correggio awoke to an understanding of the merits of the great man who had passed his life among them—his dwelling-place, his family and all personal remembrance of him had disappeared.

The greatest painter influenced by the manner of Correggio was undoubtedly Francesco Mazzola, called Parmigiano, or in Italy, to distinguish him from others who were also natives of Parma, Parmigianino. He was born at Parma in 1504, and as his father died when he was a child, he was brought up by two uncles with his cousin Girolamo Bedola Mazzola. Both uncles and nephews were painters, and all seem to have been deeply influenced by the new style of painting introduced by Correggio.

Francesco Mazzola was at a most impressionable age while Correggio was executing his great works in San Giovanni and the Cathedral, and although he was never an actual scholar of the great master, yet he probably learnt as much

from working under him, and endeavouring to copy his manner, as if he had entered his studio as a pupil. Nothing but real genius saved him from becoming a mere imitator.

In 1523, Parmigiano went to Rome, where his works were much admired—the more so doubtless that Correggio was unknown there at that time. The Pope, Clement VII., especially appreciated his works, and the young painter presented him with several of his finest productions. Among these was a curious portrait of himself as seen in a convex mirror, the glassy surface being well preserved.

He rose rapidly in favour at the Papal Court, and was in hopes of receiving the commission to paint a wall of the Vatican, that had just been prepared for frescoes, when, in 1527 all art work in Rome was suddenly interrupted by the siege and sack of the city by the troops of Charles V. under the Constable de Bourbon. Most of the painters fled while there was yet time, but Parmigiano, trusting as we cannot help thinking, to the effect that might be produced by imitating the conduct of the Greek painter Protogenes at the siege of Rhodes, remained at his post painting diligently. He is said to have been engaged on the large altar-piece of the *Madonna and Child with St. Jerome* now in the National Gallery of London, when the soldiers burst into the room bent on plunder. They were fortunately accompanied by an officer, who was so struck with admiration that he allowed the painter to ransom his effects by the present of a few sketches. This did not suffice, however, with the next band of soldiers that arrived, and he was at last forced to fly, robbed of all that he possessed, except his talent.

He went to Bologna, where he was soon hard at work making etchings from his own designs. In this he was most successful, and the fifteen plates executed by him, show

the true artist's work. M. Duplessis, in his "Histoire de la Gravure," says: "Francesco Mazzola succeeded in obtaining effects unknown before him. The plates which he signed, drawn with elegance and distinction, while they show a certain carelessness for the purity and fineness of the execution, reveal all the qualities of the painter—gracefulness and a sort of peculiar beauty which does not interfere either with bold outlines or with tall and graceful forms. They also show a knowledge of chiaroscuro which was unknown to his predecessors in engraving."

The remainder of Parmigiano's life is very sad. He was robbed of some of his designs and tools by a friend, who was helping him, and he then returned to painting. Many of his chief easel pictures were executed during his stay at Bologna. He seems, however, to have been dissatisfied with himself and his own work, and to have tried incessantly to find out a new career in painting, in which he should not be a mere imitator of his predecessors. So he forestalled the Carracci by an attempt at eclecticism, which failed, as those attempts are apt to fail. The mighty forms of Michelangelo do not suit well the Correggesque grace which he sought to engraft on them. He even tried to improve the tender grace and delicate finish he had learned from Correggio, and thus too often rendered his figures affected, or spoiled their symmetry by making them out of proportion—as in the *Madonna del Col lungo* in the Pitti Palace at Florence where the neck of the Virgin is so long as to be almost a deformity.

The painter was keenly alive to his own shortcomings, and it seems to have given him a distaste for his art. On his return to Parma in 1531, plenty of commissions awaited him; Correggio had retired to end his days in his native town, and Parmigiano was without a rival in the city. He was at once

engaged to paint a chapel in the church of La Steccata, and received half the money in advance. Delays occurred about the erection of the scaffolding, and the artist undertook and executed private commissions in the meantime. At last he began his work and painted in the church the frescoes of *Adam and Eve*, and the *Moses breaking the Tables of the Law* which Sir Joshua Reynolds highly admired. Again the painter abandoned his work, and was at last arrested for not having fulfilled his contract. However, as it appeared that the artist could not well complete his frescoes while in prison, he was grudgingly released after having given a solemn promise that he would now really finish the work. Instead of doing so, however, he fled to Casal-Maggiore, where he died soon after of a violent fever in 1540, at the age of thirty-seven—the same as that at which Raphael died. The evident failure of the latter part of his short life has been attributed to various causes. It has been said that he gambled—but this was disproved by his Parmese biographer the Padre Affò—and that he wasted his time in researches after the Philosopher's Stone—and this seems more probable. Chemistry, or what passed for chemistry, was one of the subjects then exciting most interest, and to an eager mind like Parmigiano's, always seeking for some new way in which to distinguish itself, it would have special attraction. His chief works are the frescoes in the churches of San Giovanni and the Steccata at Parma; a *Holy Family* and his own *Portrait* in the Uffizi Gallery; the *Madonna with the long neck* in the Pitti Palace at Florence; the *Virgin and Child with St. Margaret*, at Belogna—which is generally considered his finest work—and a small repetition of which is in the Louvre; *Virgin and Child with Saints*, and *Madonna with the Rose* in the

Dresden Gallery, and *Cupid making his Bow* at Vienna. This last was long attributed to Correggio.

Of other followers of Correggio the best known are : FRANCESCO CAPELLI who afterwards settled in Bologna, and who acquired so much of his master's style as to have one of his pictures, a *St. Sebastian* at his native Sassuolo, attributed to Correggio ; GIOVANNI GIAROLA of Reggio—a fresco painter, who acquired something of his master's delicacy in execution, though his drawing is hasty and careless ; ANTONIO BERNIERI (1516—1565), a miniature painter, who from being called "da Correggio" to distinguish him as a pupil of the great master has sometimes been confounded with the master himself ; BERNARDINO GATTI (1495—1575) called Il Sojaro, the cooper, from the trade of his father. No paintings by Gatti are to be found in the Academy at Parma, but Hirt, a German writer, says of his works at Naples, that "they are composed with the discretion of Leonardo, designed with the learning of Michelangelo, inspired with the breath of Raphael, coloured with the fresh tone of Titian and transfused with the chiaroscuro of Correggio." Vasari also speaks of Sojaro in terms of praise, but not quite so high-flown as those of Hirt. GIORGIO GANDINI, who appears to have been highly thought of in Parma, and who completed the dome in the Cathedral, a small portion of which Correggio had left unfinished.

The greatest painters who were influenced by Correggio's style during his lifetime were Francesco and Girolamo Mazzola and Girolamo da Carpi, of whom Vasari says that one of Correggio's works—*Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen*—"did so possess itself of the heart of Girolamo that he could not satisfy himself with copying it, and at length set

off for Modena to see the other works of Correggio in that place." Here he saw the *Marriage of St. Catherine*, now in the Louvre, and the *Madonna of St. George*, now at Dresden. He then passed on to Parma, where he copied the frescoes in the Cathedral and in the church of San Giovanni, and his style became thoroughly Correggesque in character, though he was never a scholar of the master himself.





THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF CORREGGIO.

I. FRESCOES IN PARMA.

In the Cathedral.

Assumption of the Virgin: the twelve Apostles: the four Patron Saints of Parma, John the Baptist, Thomas, Hilary, and Bernard [*on the dome*]. Painted in 1526-30. An original sketch for this is in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

In San Giovanni Evangelista.

Ascension of Christ; with his twelve Apostles: the four Evangelists; with the four Fathers of the Church [*on the dome*] Painted in 1521-23. (Water-colour copies are in the South Kensington Museum.) The frieze of emblems of the Evangelists, and Putti, done in monochrome, were painted from Correggio's designs by his pupils Rondani and Forelli.

St. John [*over the door leading to the cloisters*].

In the Convent of San Paolo (now a school).

Diana [*over the chimney-piece*]. Mythologic and allegoric figures, in sixteen lunettes in monochrome; and sixteen groups of "Putti," in medallions [*on the vaulted ceiling*]. Painted in 1518-19. (Water-colour copies may be seen on the south-west staircase of the South Kensington Museum.)

In the Palazzo della Pilotta.

In the Library.

Christ and the Virgin. [Part of the original painting of "The Coronation of the Virgin" executed in 1524 on the half dome of the choir of San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma: removed in 1584 when the choir was altered. Other portions are in the collection of Lord Dudley. Copies of this work by Agostino and Annibale Carracci are in the Picture Gallery.]

In the Picture Gallery.

Madonna della Scala. [Formerly in the church of the

In the Picture Gallery.

Madonna della Scala: originally painted in 1520 over the Porta Romana.]

Annunciation. [Formerly in the church of the Annunziata, in Parma.]

II. EASEL PICTURES.

A. SACRED SUBJECTS.

Adoration of the Shepherds. "La Notte." Painted in 1522-30 for Alberto Pratonero for San Prospero at Reggio, which now only possesses a copy. The original is in the Dresden Gallery.

Christ's Agony in the Garden. Perhaps painted about 1525. The original is at Apsley House: copies are in the National Gallery, the Uffizi, Florence, and the Madrid Gallery.

Christ and the Magdalen. ("Noli me tangere.") Painted about 1519. Doubted by Dr. Meyer. In the Madrid Gallery.

Christ presented by Pilate to the People. ("Ecce Homo.") Probably painted about 1520. Dr. Meyer and others doubt its authenticity; but all agree that it is the design of Correggio. In the National Gallery, London. An old copy was bought by Messrs. Colnaghi for £273 at the Hamilton Palace Sale, July 1, 1882.

Christ mourned by the Virgin (Pietà). Painted on linen in 1522-24 for Placido del Bono for his chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma. In the Parma Gallery: a copy is in the Madrid Gallery.

"Madonna della Cesta." ("La Vierge au panier.") Probably painted about 1520. The original is in the National Gallery: an old copy is in the Dulwich College Gallery, and another in the Madrid Gallery.

"Madonna del Coniglio." ("La Zingarella.") Probably painted in 1520. The original is in the Naples Gallery. A similar picture is in the Belvedere, Vienna.

"Madonna of St. Francis." (Madonna and Child with SS. Francis and Anthony of Padua, and SS. John the Baptist and Catherine.) Painted in 1514-15 for the Minorite Church at Correggio. Correggio's earliest work. Signed ANTOVUS DE ALEGRIIS P. In the Dresden Gallery.

"Madonna of St. George." (Madonna and Child with SS. Geminianus and John the Baptist, and SS. Peter Martyr and George.) *Perhaps painted in 1530-32 for the Brotherhood of San Pietro Martire in Modena. In the Dresden Gallery.*

"Madonna di San Girolamo." ("St. Jerome," "Il Giorno." Madonna and Child with St. Jerome, the Magdalen and an Angel.) *Painted in 1527-28 for Donna Briseide Colla for Sant' Antonio Abbate at Parma. The original is in the Parma Gallery. A copy, said to be by Lodovico Carracci, is in Bridgewater House, London.*

"Madonna della Scodella." (The Flight into Egypt.) *Painted in 1527-28, probably for San Sepolcro, Parma. In the Parma Gallery.*

"Madonna of St. Sebastian." (Madonna and Child with SS. Sebastian, Geminianus and Roch.) *Painted in 1525 for the Guild of St. Sebastian for the chapel of St. Geminianus in the Cathedral at Modena. In the Dresden Gallery.*

Madonna adoring the Infant Christ. *Probably painted about 1519. In the Uffizi, Florence.*

Madonna and Infant Christ, to whom an angel offers fruit. *Painted probably about 1519-21. In the Hermitage, St. Petersburg. Similar pictures, also by Correggio, are in the Buda-Pesth Gallery and the Palazzo Torlonia, Rome.*

Martyrdom of SS. Placidus and Flavia. *Painted on linen in 1522-24 for Placido del Bono for his chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma. In the Parma Gallery.*

Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine. *Painted in 1517 or 1518. In the Louvre. A somewhat similar picture is in the Naples Gallery: by some critics said to be only a copy by Lodovico Carracci, but more generally accepted as a genuine work of Correggio. Old copies are in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, and Bridgewater House, London.*

Reading Magdalen. *Painted towards the close of Correggio's life. In the Dresden Gallery. An old copy is in the possession of Lord Dudley: another, by Cristofano Allori (who copied it more than once) is in the Uffizi, Florence.*

Repose in Egypt. *In the Uffizi, Florence. Correggio painted in 1514 a picture of this subject for the church of the Franciscans at Correggio, probably by order of Francesco Munari. Authorities differ as to whether this Uffizi picture is actually his own work. All, however, agree that it is his design.*

B. MYTHOLOGIC AND ALLEGORIC SUBJECTS.

Antiope with Cupid and Jupiter. *Formerly called the "Sleeping Venus." Painted about the middle of Correggio's career. In the Louvre.*

Apollo and Marsyas. *Painted on the lid of a clavacin. In the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.*

Danaë and the Golden Shower. *Painted for Charles V. In the Palazzo Borghese, Rome.*

Ganymede carried off by an Eagle. *Probably painted about 1530. A fresco transferred to canvas, formerly in the Palazzo Rocca at Novellara. Dr. Meyer doubts its genuineness. In the Modena Gallery.*

Io and Jupiter. *Probably painted about 1530. In the Belvedere, Vienna. An old copy is in the Berlin Museum.*

Leda and Nymphs surprised by Swans. *Painted for Charles V. In the Berlin Museum. A replica is in the Palazzo Rospiglioso, Rome; and an old copy is in the Madrid Gallery.*

Mercury instructing Cupid in the presence of Venus. ("The Education of Cupid.") *Painted about the middle of Correggio's career. In the National Gallery, London. An old copy of part of it is in the Dulwich College Gallery.*

Triumph of Virtue. *Painted in tempera on linen for Isabella Gonsaga in 1533. In the Louvre. An unfinished replica is in the Palazzo Doria, Rome.*

Vice and the Passions. *Painted in tempera on linen for Isabella Gonsaga in 1533. In the Louvre.*

III. WORKS COMMONLY ASCRIBED WITH SOME REASON TO CORREGGIO, BUT DOUBTED BY VARIOUS CRITICS.¹

Christ bearing the Cross. *Said to have been painted about 1520. In the Parma Gallery.*

Madonna and Child with SS. Mary Magdalen and Lucia. *Signed ANTONIUS LÆTUS FACIEBAT. Doubted by Dr. Meyer and other critics, who consider it a copy of a long-lost original. Mündler thought it genuine, and Correggio's earliest production. In the Brera, Milan. A similar picture is in the parish church of Albinea, near Reggio.*

Madonna and Child with the Infant St. John. *Considered by Frizzoni to be one of Correggio's earliest works. In the Ambrosian Gallery, Milan.*

Madonna and Infant Christ with SS. Christopher, Michael and John the Baptist. *Said to have been painted about 1519. In the Pitti Palace, Florence.*

Madonna undressing the Infant Christ. *In the possession of the Marchese Cesare Campari, Modena.*

Man driving two Mules. *Said to have been painted as a sign-board for an inn in the Via Flaminia, Rome. At Stafford House, London.*

Portrait of a Doctor. *Said to be an early work. In the Dresden Gallery.*

SS. Peter, Margaret, Anthony of Padua and the Magdalen. *Thought to be the same as the painting of "SS. Peter, Martha, Leonard and the Magdalen" done in 1517. In Lord Ashburton's Collection.*

Vengeance of Apollo on Marsyas and the Fate of Midas. *Formerly in the possession of Duke Litta of Milan. Now in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.*

¹ It would take up much space to no purpose to enumerate all the works in public and private collections assigned on insufficient grounds to Correggio.



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